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THE LIFE OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

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BY

GRAHAM BALFOUR

ABRIDGED EDITION

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Stevenson

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THE LIFE OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

CHAPTER I

HIS ANCESTORS

"The ascendant hand is what I feel most strongly; I am bound in and in with my forbears. . . . We are all nobly born; fortunate those who know it; blessed those who remember."—R. L. S., *Letters*, iii. 316.

"The sights and thoughts of my youth pursue me; and I see like a vision the youth of my father, and of his father, and the whole stream of lives flowing down there far in the north, with the sound of laughter and tears, to cast me out in the end, as by a sudden freshet, on these ultimate islands. And I admire and bow my head before the romance of destiny."—R. L. S., *Dedication of Catriona.*

"IT is the chief recommendation of long pedigrees," as Stevenson once wrote, "that we can follow back the careers of our component parts and be reminded of our ante-natal lives." But the threads are many and tangled, and it is hard to distinguish for more than a generation or two the transmission of the characteristics that are combined in any individual of our own day. When a man has been dead for a hundred years, it is seldom that anything is remembered of him but his name and his occupation;

he has become no more than a link in a pedigree, and the personal disposition is forgotten which made him loved or feared, together with the powers that gained him success, or the weaknesses that brought about his failure. Therefore it is no unusual circumstance that, while we can trace the line of Stevenson's ancestors on either side for two and four hundred years respectively, our knowledge of them, in any real sense of the word, begins only at the end of the eighteenth century. After that date we have four portraits, drawn in part by his own hand, together with the materials for another sketch; in these may be discerned some of the traits and faculties which went to make up a personality so unusual, so fascinating, and so deeply loved.

The record of his father's people opens in 1675 with the birth of a son, Robert, to James Stevenson, "presumably a tenant farmer" of Nether Carsewell in the parish of Neilston, some ten miles to the southwest of Glasgow. Robert's son, a maltster in Glasgow, had ten children, among whom were Hugh, born 1749, and Alan, born June, 1752.

"With these two brothers my story begins," their descendant wrote in *A Family of Engineers*. "Their deaths were simultaneous; their lives unusually brief and full. Tradition whispered me in childhood they were the owners of an islet near St. Kitts; and it is certain they had risen to be at the head of considerable interests in the West Indies, which Hugh managed abroad and Alan at home," almost before they had reached the years of manhood. In 1774 Alan

was summoned to the West Indies by Hugh. "An agent had proved unfaithful on a serious scale; and it used to be told me in my childhood how the brothers pursued him from one island to another in an open boat, were exposed to the pernicious dews of the tropics, and simultaneously struck down. The dates and places of their deaths would seem to indicate a more scattered and prolonged pursuit." At all events, "in something like the course of post, both were called away, the one twenty-five, the other twenty-two."

Alan left behind him a wife and one child, Robert, aged two, the future engineer of the Bell Rock, who was destined to be the grandfather of Robert Louis Stevenson. The widow was daughter of David Lillie, a Glasgow builder, several times Deacon of the Wrights, but had lost her father only a month before her husband's death, and for the time, at any rate, mother and son were almost destitute. She was, however, "a young woman of strong sense, well fitted to contend with poverty, and of a pious disposition, which it is like that these misfortunes heated. Like so many other widowed Scotswomen, she vowed her son should wag his head in a pulpit; but her means were inadequate to her ambition." He made no great figure at the schools in Edinburgh to which she could afford to send him; but before he was fifteen there occurred an event "which changed his own destiny and moulded that of his descendants —the second marriage of his mother."

The new husband was "a merchant burgess of Edinburgh of the name of Thomas Smith," a wid-

ower of thirty-three with children, who is described as "a man ardent, passionate, practical, designed for affairs, and prospering in them far beyond the average." He was, among other things, a shipowner and underwriter; but chiefly he "founded a solid business in lamps and oils, and was the sole proprietor of a concern called the Greenside Company's Works —'a multifarious concern of tinsmiths, coppersmiths, brassfounders, blacksmiths, and japanners.'" Consequently, in August 1786, less than a year before his second marriage, "having designed a system of oil lights to take the place of the primitive coal fires before in use, he was dubbed engineer to the newly-formed Board of Northern Lighthouses."

The profession was a new one, just beginning to grow in the hands of its first practitioners; in it Robert Stevenson found his vocation and so entered with great zest into the pursuits of his stepfather. "The public usefulness of the service would appeal to his judgment, the perpetual need for fresh expedients stimulate his ingenuity. And there was another attraction which, in the young man at least, appealed to, and perhaps first aroused a profound and enduring sentiment of romance; I mean the attraction of the life. The seas into which his labours carried the new engineer were still scarce charted, the coasts still dark; his way on shore was often far beyond the convenience of any road, the isles in which he must sojourn were still partly savage. He must toss much in boats; he must often adventure on horseback by the dubious bridle-track through unfrequented wildernesses; he must sometimes plant his lighthouse in

the very camp of wreckers; and he was continually enforced to the vicissitudes of outdoor life. The joy of my grandfather in this career was strong as the love of woman. It lasted him through youth and manhood, it burned strong in age, and at the approach of death his last yearning was to renew these loved experiences. At the age of nineteen I find him already in a post of some authority, superintending the construction of the lighthouse on the isle of Little Cumbrae in the Firth of Clyde. The change of aim seems to have caused or been accompanied by a change of character. It sounds absurd to couple the name of my grandfather with the word indolence; but the lad who had been destined from the cradle to the Church, and who had attained the age of fifteen without acquiring more than a moderate knowledge of Latin, was at least no unusual student. From the day of his charge at Little Cumbrae he steps before us what he remained until the end—a man of the most zealous industry, greedy of occupation, greedy of knowledge, a stern husband of time, a reader, a writer, unflagging in his task of self-improvement. Thenceforward his summers were spent directing works and ruling workmen, now in uninhabited, now in half-savage islands; his winters were set apart, first at the Andersonian Institution, then at the University of Edinburgh, to improve himself in mathematics, chemistry, natural history, agriculture, moral philosophy, and logic."

His mother's marriage made a great change also in his domestic life: an only child hitherto, he had become a member of a large family, for his step-

father had already five children. However, "the perilous experiment of bringing together two families for once succeeded. Mr. Smith's two eldest daughters, Jean and Janet, fervent in piety, unwearied in kind deeds, were well qualified both to appreciate and to attract the stepmother," just as her son found immediate favour in the eyes of her husband. Either family, it seems, had been composed of two elements; and in the united household "not only were the women extremely pious but the men were in reality a trifle worldly. Religious the latter both were; conscious, like all Scotts, of the fragility and unreality of that scene in which we play our uncomprehended parts; like all Scots, realising daily and hourly the sense of another will than ours, and a perpetual direction in the affairs of life. But the current of their endeavours flowed in a more obvious channel. They had got on so far, to get on further was their next ambition—to gather wealth, to rise in society, to leave their descendants higher than themselves, to be (in some sense) among the founders of families. Scott was in the same town nourishing similiar dreams. But in the eyes of the women these dreams would be foolish and idolatrous."

The connection thus established was destined yet further to affect the life of the young man, and this contrast in the household was still to be perpetuated. "By an extraordinary arrangement, in which it is hard not to suspect the managing hand of a mother, Jean Smith became the wife of Robert Stevenson. The marriage of a man of twenty-seven and a girl of twenty, who have lived for twelve years as brother and

sister, is difficult to conceive. It took place, however, and thus in 1799 the family was still further cemented by the union of a representative of the male or worldly element with that of the female and devout.

"This essential difference remained unabridged, yet never diminished the strength of their relation. My grandfather pursued his design of advancing in the world with some measure of success; rose to distinction in his calling, grew to be the familiar of members of Parliament, judges of the Court of Session, and 'landed gentlemen'; learned a ready address, had a flow of interesting conversation, and when he was referred to as 'a highly respectable *bourgeois*,' resented the description. My grandmother remained to the end devout and unambitious, occupied with her Bible, her children, and her house; easily shocked, and associating largely with a clique of godly parasites. . . .

"The cook was a godly woman, the butcher a Christian man, and the table suffered. The scene has been described to me of my grandfather sawing with darkened countenance at some indissoluble joint—'Preserve me, my dear, what kind of a reedy, stringy beast is this?'—of the joint removed, the pudding substituted and uncovered; and of my grandmother's anxious glance and hasty, deprecatory comment, 'Just mismanaged!' Yet with the invincible obstinacy of soft natures, she would adhere to the godly woman and the Christian man, or find others of the same kidney to replace them."

Readers of *Weir of Hermiston* will recognise in this picture the original of Mrs. Weir in all her piety,

gentleness, and incompetence, yet in real life, 'husband and sons all entertained for this pious, tender soul the same chivalrous and moved affection.'

It is no part of my purpose to follow the professional life of Robert Stevenson, which was, moreover, written by his son David. In 1807 he was appointed sole engineer to the Board of Northern Lights, and in the same year began his great work at the Bell Rock, the first lighthouse ever erected far from land upon a reef deeply submerged at every tide. He built twenty lighthouses in all, and introduced many inventions and improvements in the system of lighting. He did not resign his post until his powers began to fail in 1843, and he died in 1850, four months before the birth of the most famous of his grandsons.

"He began to ail early in that year, and chafed for the period of the annual voyage, which was his medicine and delight. In vain his sons dissuaded him from the adventure. The day approached, the obstinate old gentleman was found in his room, furtively packing a portmanteau, and the truth had to be told him ere he would desist—that he was stricken with a malignant malady, and that before the yacht should have completed her circuit of the lights, must himself have started on a more distant cruise. My father has more than once told me of the scene with emotion. The old man was intrepid; he had faced death before with a firm countenance; and I do not suppose he was much dashed at the nearness of our common destiny. But there was something else that would cut him to the quick—the loss of the cruise, the end of all his cruising; the

knowledge that he had looked his last on Sumburgh, and the wild crags of Skye, and that Sound of Mull, with the praise of which his letters were so often occupied; that he was never again to hear the surf break in Clashcarnock; never again to see lighthouse after lighthouse (all younger than himself, and the more part of his own device) open in the hour of dusk their flowers of fire, or the topaz and the ruby interchange on the summit of the Bell Rock. To a life of so much activity and danger, a life's work of so much interest and essential beauty, here came a long farewell."

"My grandfather was much of a martinet, and had a habit of expressing himself on paper with an almost startling emphasis. Personally, with his powerful voice, sanguine countenance, and eccentric and original locutions, he was well qualified to inspire a salutary terror in the service. . . . In that service he was king to his finger-tips. All should go in his way, from the principal lightkeeper's coat to the assistant's fender, from the gravel in the garden-walks to the bad smell in the kitchen, or the oil-spots on the storeroom floor. It might be thought there was nothing more calculated to awake men's resentment, and yet his rule was not more thorough than it was beneficent. His thought for the keepers was continual, and it did not end with their lives. . . . While they lived, he wrote behind their backs to arrange for the education of their children, or to get them other situations if they seemed unsuitable for the Northern Lights. When he was at a lighthouse on a Sunday he held prayers and heard the children

read. When a keeper was sick, he lent him his horse and sent him mutton and brandy from the ship. 'The assistant's wife having been this morning confined, there was sent ashore a bottle of sherry and a few rusks—a practice which I have always observed in this service.' . . . No servant of the Northern Lights came to Edinburgh but he was entertained at Baxter's Place to breakfast. There at his own table my grandfather sat down delightedly with his broad-spoken, home-spun officers. His whole relation to the service was, in fact, patriarchal; and I believe I may say that throughout its ranks he was adored. I have spoken with many who knew him; I was his grandson, and their words may very well have been words of flattery; but there was one thing that could not be affected, and that was the look and light that came into their faces at the name of Robert Stevenson."

Sir Walter Scott accompanied the Commissioners and their officer on one of the annual voyages of the *Pharos* round the coasts of Scotland, and his *Journal* shows that he found Robert Stevenson an appreciative and intelligent companion.

While the great engineer was the man of action that his grandson longed to be, he also essayed authorship to some purpose. He wrote and published an *Account of the Bell Rock Lighthouse*, which, as his grandson says, "is of its sort a masterpiece, and has been so recognised by judges; 'the romance of stone and lime,' it has been called, and 'the Robinson Crusoe of engineering,' both happy and descriptive phrases. Even in his letters, though he cannot always

be trusted for the construction of his sentences, the same literary virtues are apparent—a strong sense of romance and reality, and an almost infallible instinct for the right detail."

Traits are obliterated and the characteristics of a family may change, but the old man's detestation of everything slovenly or dishonest, "his interest in the whole page of experience, and his perpetual quest and fine scent for all that seems romantic to a boy," were handed down, if ever taste was transmitted, to his grandson. Of the one as of the other it might well have been said that "Perfection was his design." But when we come to Thomas Stevenson, we shall find in him even more of the habits of mind and temper which distinguished his more celebrated son.

Stevenson's mother was the youngest daughter of the Rev. Lewis Balfour, D.D., minister of Colinton, a parish on the stream known as the Water of Leith, four miles to the south-west of Edinburgh. The earliest known member of this family was one Alexander Balfour, placed in charge of the King's Cellar by James IV., in 1499, and of the Queen's Cellar in 1507; he held the lands of Inchrye in Fife, and was in all probability one of the Balfours of Mountquhannie, a numerous family, high in the favour of King James. The descendants of Alexander were chiefly ministers, advocates, or merchants.

His grandson James Balfour, one of the ministers of St. Giles', Edinburgh, from 1589 to 1613, married a niece of Andrew Melville the Reformer, and was, as a brass in his church now records, "one of those

who, summoned by James VI. to Hampton Court in 1606, refused to surrender their principles to his desires for the establishment of Episcopacy in Scotland." James, born 1680, whose father was one of the Governors of the Darien Company, bought the estate of Pilrig, lying between Edinburgh and Leith, with which the family has ever since been connected, and to which David Balfour is brought in *Catriona*. The laird whom David met was James, born 1705, who, having studied at Leyden, became Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, and then exchanged this Chair for that of the Laws of Nature and Nations. His wife was a daughter of Sir John Elphinstone of Logie and granddaughter of Sir Gilbert Elliot, known as Lord Minto, a judge of the Court of Session. It was through this connection that Stevenson was able to say, "I have shaken a spear in the Debateable Land and shouted the slogan of the Elliots." Sir Gilbert's grandmother, Margaret Elliot, was a daughter of "Auld Wat Scott" of Harden and Mary Scott his wife, known as The Flower of Yarrow, who were thus common ancestors of Louis Stevenson and of Sir Walter Scott. John Balfour, son of the Professor and father of the minister of Colinton, married his cousin Jean Whyte; and so by this marriage Stevenson's mother was a second cousin of the novelist, Major George Whyte-Melville.

Lewis Balfour was born at Pilrig in 1777; about the age of twenty he showed symptoms of a weak chest, and was sent for a winter to the Isle of Wight with the most entire success. On returning, he took

orders, went to his first Ayrshire parish, and there fell in love with, and married, a daughter of Dr. Smith of Galston, the Dr. Smith who in Burns's *Holy Fair* "opens out his cauld harangues on practice and on morals." In 1823 he came to the parish of Colinton, and there remained until his death thirty-seven years later. In 1844 he lost his wife, a woman of great personal beauty and force of character, and the care of the household fell into the hands of his eldest unmarried daughter. His is the manse of *Memories and Portraits*, the favourite home of his grandson's childhood. The essay in question describes him "as a man of singular simplicity of nature; unemotional, and hating the display of what he felt; standing contented on the old ways; a lover of his life and innocent habits to the end. We children admired him —partly for his beautiful face and silver hair, for none more than children are concerned for beauty and, above all, for beauty in the old; partly for the solemn light in which we beheld him once a week, the observed of all observers, in the pulpit. But his strictness and distance, the effect, I now fancy, of old age, slow blood, and settled habit, oppressed us with a kind of terror. . . . He had no idea of spoiling children, leaving all that to my aunt; he had fared hard himself, and blubbered under the rod in the last century; and his ways were still Spartan for the young. . . . When not abroad, he sat much alone, writing sermons or letters to his scattered family in a dark and cold room with a library of bloodless books—and these lonely hours wrapped him in the greater gloom for our imaginations. But the study

had a redeeming grace in many Indian pictures, gaudily coloured and dear to young eyes. I cannot depict (for I have no such passions now) the greed with which I beheld them; and when I was once sent in to say a psalm to my grandfather, I went, quaking indeed with fear, but at the same time glowing with hope that if I said it well, he might reward me with an Indian picture.

> "Thy foot He'll not let slide, nor will
> He slumber that thee keeps,"

it ran—a strange conglomerate of the unpronounceable, a sad model to set in childhood before one who was himself to be a versifier, and a task in recitation that really merited reward."

"And I must suppose the old man thought so too, and was either touched or amused by the performance; for he took me in his arms with most unwonted tenderness and kissed me, and gave me a little kindly sermon for my psalm; so that, for that day, we were clerk and parson." The picture was not given (how should it have been?) but on that, and more than one other occasion, the minister showed himself in a gracious and sympathetic mood to his little kinsman. "Try as I please," wrote the grandson in later days, "I cannot join myself on with the reverend doctor; and all the while, no doubt, and even as I write the phrase, he moves in my blood, and whispers words to me, and sits efficient in the very knot and centre of my being." Yet even if no individual traits or physical resemblances can be traced to the old minister, much of the general Scottish cast of

character in Stevenson—the "strong Scots accent of the mind"—was confirmed by this strain; and it is evident that his intensity, his ethical preoccupations, and, as he himself says, his "love of preaching" were due, at all events in part, to the fact that he was a "grandson of the manse."

Such, at any rate, was the history of his maternal ancestors, the Balfours, a family who possessed in a high degree the domestic virtues of the Lowland Scot. Till after the date I have reached, few of the cadets ever sought their fortunes abroad, though the next generation was more enterprising, and four out of Mrs. Stevenson's five brothers spent much of their lives in India or New Zealand. But for the most part the family were stay-at-home folk, and adventures, which are to the adventurous, came not near their peaceful dwellings.

If it be difficult to follow his ancestors, it is manifestly impossible to find any safe ground for speculating on the race to which Stevenson belonged. None of his forbears for many centuries, so far as we can tell, were newcomers to Scotland; and it is probable that in him, as in almost any other native of the same region, several strains of the long-established races were combined. The word "Balfour," as Cluny reminds us in *Kidnapped*, is "good Gaelic," its meaning being "cold croft or farm." The place of that name is in Fife. The estate was held by the Bethunes for five hundred years, until recently it passed again into the hands of a Balfour "of that ilk." But the appellation of a family need signify no more than the former possession of some

holding to which the Celts had already given a name, and the Balfours of Pilrig belonged apparently to an East Lowland type. Renfrew, on the other hand, was part of the Celtic kingdom of the Britons of Alclyde, and it was in that territory that the name of Stevenson had been chiefly found, and that this particular family was settled. Neither name nor locality, however, is any sure guide to an origin so remote; and we can be certain of no more than this, that Louis Stevenson and his father and grandfather exhibited many moods and tendencies of mind attributed to the Celtic race.

CHAPTER II

HIS PARENTS

"We are the pledge of their dear and joyful union, we have been the solicitude of their days and the anxiety of their nights, we have made them, though by no will of ours, to carry the burden of our sins, sorrows, and physical infirmities. . . . A good son, who can fulfil what is expected of him, has done his work in life. He has to redeem the sins of many, and restore the world's confidence in children."—R. L. S., "Reflections and Remarks on Human Life," *Addenda*, Thistle ed., vol. 22, p. 622.

WITHOUT a knowledge of his parents it would be hard to understand the man whose life and character are set forth in these pages. Yet of Thomas Stevenson, at any rate, I should despair of presenting any adequate image, were it not for the sketch in *Memories and Portraits*, and an account of his boyhood, written by his son in 1887, and as yet unpublished, which would have formed a later chapter of *A Family of Engineers*.

He was born in 1818, the youngest son of Robert Stevenson, and one of a family of thirteen children.

"He had his education at a private school, kept by a capable but very cruel man called Brown, in Nelson Street, and then at the High School at Edinburgh. His first year was in the old building down Infirmary Street, and I have often heard him tell how he took part in the procession to the new and beautiful place upon the Calton Hill. Piper was his master, a fellow much given to thrashing. He never

seems to have worked for any class that he attended; and in Piper's took a place about half-way between the first and last of a hundred and eighty boys.

"For there was this difference between father and son. Robert took education and success at school for a thing of infinite import; to Thomas, in his young independence, it all seemed Vanity of Vanities. Indeed, there seems to have been nothing more rooted in him than his contempt for all the ends, processes, and ministers of education. Tutor was ever a by-word with him; 'positively tutorial,' he would say of people or manners he despised; and with rare consistency, he bravely encouraged me to neglect my lessons, and never so much as asked me my place in school. . . .

"My father's life, in the meantime, and the truly formative parts of his education, lay entirely in his hours of play.

"No. 1 Baxter's Place, my grandfather's house, must have been a paradise for boys. It was of great size, with an infinity of cellars below, and of garrets, apple-lofts, etc., above; and it had a long garden, which ran down to the foot of the Calton Hill, with an orchard that yearly filled the apple-loft, and a building at the foot frequently besieged and defended by the boys, where a poor golden eagle, trophy of some of my grandfather's Hebridean voyages, pined and screamed itself to death. Its front was Leith Walk with its traffic; at one side a very deserted lane, with the office door, a carpenter's shop, and the like; and behind, the big, open slopes of the Calton Hill. Within, there was the seemingly rather awful rule of

the old gentleman, tempered, I fancy, by the mild and devout mother with her 'Keep me's.' There was a coming and going of odd, out-of-the-way characters, skippers, light-keepers, masons, and foremen of all sorts, whom my grandfather, in his patriarchal fashion, liked to have about the house, and who were a never-failing delight to the boys. Tutors shed a gloom for an hour or so in the evening, . . . and these and that accursed schoolgoing were the black parts of their life."

Robert Stevenson had intended only one of his sons to follow his own profession. But in the end their natural tastes prevailed, and no less than three of the brothers entered the business, practised it at large with great ability and success, and were all three, conjointly or in turn, appointed to the official post their father and grandfather had held of Engineer to the Board of Northern Lights. Thomas Stevenson did much valuable work in lighthouse building and in the improvement of rivers and harbours, but it is in connection with the illumination of lighthouses that his name will be remembered. He brought to perfection the revolving light, and himself invented "the azimuthal condensing system." More familiar to the world at large, if less remarkable, are the louvre-boarded screens which he applied to the protection of meteorological instruments. He became moreover a recognised authority on engineering; he gave much weighty evidence before Parliamentary committees; and his position in the scientific world was marked in 1884 by his election to the Presidentship of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

His entire life was devoted to the unremitting pursuit of a scientific profession, in which it was his dearest wish to see his son following in his footsteps; yet it was from him that Louis derived all the romantic and artistic elements that drew him away from engineering, and were the chief means by which he became an acknowledged master of his art.

The apparent inconsistencies of the father were numerous, but all of them were such as add force and picturesqueness to a character, and only increased the affection of those who knew and understood him most thoroughly.

"He was a man," writes his son, "of a somewhat antique strain; with a blended sternness and softness that was wholly Scottish and at first somewhat bewildering; with a profound essential melancholy of disposition and (what often accompanies it) the most humorous geniality in company; shrewd and childish; passionately attached, passionately prejudiced; a man of many extremes, many faults of temper, and no very stable foothold for himself among life's troubles. Yet he was a wise adviser; many men, and these not inconsiderable, took counsel with him habitually. . . . He had excellent taste, though whimsical and partial; . . . took a lasting pleasure in prints and pictures; . . . and, though he read little, was constant to his favourite books. He was a strong Conservative or, as he preferred to call himself, a Tory; except in so far as his views were modified by a hot-headed chivalrous sentiment for women. He was actually in favour of a marriage law under which any woman might have a divorce

for the asking, and no man on any ground whatever; and the same sentiment found another expression in a Magdalen Mission in Edinburgh, founded and largely supported by himself. This was but one of the many channels of his public generosity; his private was equally unrestrained. The Church of Scotland, of which he held the doctrines (though in a sense of his own), and to which he bore a clansman's loyalty, profited often by his time and money; and though, from a morbid sense of his own unworthiness, he would never consent to be an office-bearer, his advice was often sought, and he served the church on many committees. What he perhaps valued highest in his work were his contributions to the defence of Christianity; one of which, in particular, was praised by Hutchison Stirling, and reprinted at the request of Professor Crawford.

"His sense of his own unworthiness I have called morbid; morbid, too, were his sense of the fleetingness of life and his concern for death. He had never accepted the conditions of man's life or his own character; and his inmost thoughts were ever tinged with the Celtic melancholy. Cases of conscience were sometimes grievous to him, and that delicate employment of a scientific witness cost him many qualms. But he found respite from these troublesome humours in his work, in his lifelong study of natural science, in the society of those he loved, and in his daily walks, which now would carry him far into the country with some congenial friend, and now keep him dangling about the town from one old book-shop to another, and scraping romantic acquaintance with

every dog that passed. His talk, compounded of so much sterling sense and so much freakish humour, and clothed in language so apt, droll, and emphatic, was a perpetual delight to all who knew him before the clouds began to settle on his mind. His use of language was both just and picturesque; and when at the beginning of his illness he began to feel the ebbing of his power, it was strange and painful to hear him reject one word after another as inadequate, and at length desist from the search and leave his phrase unfinished rather than finish it without propriety. It was perhaps another Celtic trait that his affections and emotions, passionate as these were and liable to passionate ups and downs, found the most eloquent expression both in words and gestures. Love, anger, and indignation shone through him and broke forth in imagery, like what we read of Southern races. For all these emotional extremes, and in spite of the melancholy ground of his character, he had upon the whole a happy life; nor was he less fortunate in his death, which at the last came to him unaware."

The characteristics of the father in his boyhood might be ascribed with little alteration to his son. The circumstances differed, but the spirit, the freaks, and the idleness were the same. Every night of his life Thomas Stevenson made up stories by which he put himself to sleep, dealing perpetually "with ships, roadside inns, robbers, old sailors, and commercial travellers before the era of steam." With these and their like he soothed his son's troubled nights in childhood, and when the son grew up and made

stories of his own, he found no critic more unsparing than his father, and none more ready to take fire at "*his* own kind of picturesque."

The differences between the pair were slight, the points of resemblance many. The younger man devoted his life to art and not to science, and the hold of dogma upon him was early relaxed. But the humour and the melancholy, the sternness and the softness, the attachments and the prejudices, the chivalry, the generosity, the Celtic temperament, and the sensitive conscience passed direct from father to son in proportions but slightly varied, and to some who knew them both well the father was the more remarkable of the two. One period of misunderstanding they had, but it was brief, and might have been avoided had either of the pair been less sincere or less in earnest. Afterwards, and perhaps as a consequence, their comprehension and appreciation of each other grew complete, and their attachment was even deeper than that usually subsisting between father and only son. In the conditions of their lives there was this further difference: if the son missed the healthy boyhood, full of games and of companions, he was spared at the last the failure which he also dreaded; no less fortunate than his father in the unconsciousness of his death, he died before his prime and the fulness of his power, "in mid-career laying out vast projects," and so, "trailing with him clouds of glory," he was taken away as one whom the gods loved.

Of Mrs. Thomas Stevenson not a line of any sketch remains among the work of her son: a want

easily explained by the fact that she survived him. It is the more necessary to supply in some measure this deficiency, as the warmth of Louis' gratitude to his nurse has unjustly reacted to the prejudice of his mother, and has quite wrongly been supposed by those who did not know them to indicate neglect on one side and on the other a lack of affection.

In person she was tall, slender, and graceful; and her face and fair complexion retained their beauty, as her figure and walk preserved their elasticity, to the last. Her vivacity and brightness were most attractive; she made on strangers a quick and lasting impression, and the letters written on the news of her death attest the devotion and number of her friends. As a hostess she had great social charm, and her hospitality was but the expression of her true kindliness of heart.

Her undaunted spirit led her when nearly sixty to accompany her son, first to America, and then, in a racing schooner, through the remotest groups of the Pacific, finally to settle with him in the disturbed spot where he had chosen his home.

She had in the highest degree that readiness for enjoyment which makes light of discomfort, and turns into a holiday any break of settled routine. Her desire to be pleased, her prompt interest in any experience, however new or unexpected, her resolute refusal to see the unpleasant side of things, all had their counterpart in her son, enabling him to pass through the many dark hours that would have borne far more heavily upon his father's temperament.

Of her devotion and of her incessant thought for the boy there can be no question. I have before me as I write a series of pocket-diaries, complete (but for the second year) from 1851 until the year of her death. The earlier books are occupied exclusively with her husband and her child, and in the later volumes these two are still the staple of her entries. Louis' place in class is scrupulously noted, and that, we may be sure, with no encouragement from his father. When he was small, she read to him a great deal, and to her he owed his first acquaintance with much that is best in literature. Almost every scrap of his writing that ever passed into her hands was treasured. His first efforts at tales or histories, taken down by herself, or some other amanuensis, before he was able or willing to write; nearly every letter he ever sent her; every compliment to him, and every word of praise—all were carefully preserved, long before he showed any definite promise of becoming famous; and by her method and accuracy she was able to record for his biographer, with hardly an exception, where he spent each month of his life.

The son's attachment to his mother was no less deep and lasting. Through all her illnesses and whenever she needed his care, he was always most sedulous and affectionate, displaying at times a tenderness almost feminine. The most irregular of correspondents, he was well-nigh regular to her; master of his pen though he was, several times after he had become a man of letters he bursts out into impatience at the difficulty he finds in expressing to her and to

his father the depth of his affection and gratitude to them both.

After his father's death, when the doctors had ordered him to go to America, if he wanted to live, he wrote to her: "Not only would we not go to America without you; we should not persist in trying it, if we did not believe that it would be on the whole the best for you." From that time, but for two absences in Scotland, she made her home with him and his family, and had the reward of realising that the exile which severed him from so many of his friends had brought her to an even more intimate knowledge of his life and an even closer place in his affection.

CHAPTER III

INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD—1850–59

"I please myself often by saying that I had a Covenanting childhood."—R. L. S., MS. fragment.

"I am one of the few people in the world who do not forget their own lives."—R. L. S., *Letters*, iii. 107.

ROBERT LEWIS BALFOUR STEVENSON was born at No. 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh, on the 13th November 1850, and a few days after his birth was baptised by his grandfather, the minister of Colinton, according to the Scots custom, in his father's house. He was called after his two grandfathers, and to their names that of his mother's family was added.[1]

[1] It was as Robert Louis Stevenson that he was known to all the world, and the earlier variations of his name, remembered but by few, are of small importance. Nevertheless it may be as well to set them down here.

In his earliest letters, and down to 1865, the boy signed himself "R. Stevenson." After that he occasionally used "R. L. B. Stevenson," but in 1868 asked his mother in place of this to address him as "Robert Lewis." For the next five years he was generally but not invariably "R. L. Stevenson," until about 1873 the final change is marked by his usage and an undated letter to C. Baxter belonging to this period (now the property of the Savile Club). "After several years of feeble and ineffectual endeavour with regard to my third initial (a thing I loathe), I have been led to put myself out of reach of such accident in the future by taking my first two names in full."

The change of the name of Lewis from the Scots form to the French was made when he was about eighteen; the exact date is not easy to fix on account of his practice of using the intitial only in his signature at that period. It was only the spelling that Stevenson changed and never the pronunciation: Lewis he remained at all times in the mouth of his family and of his intimate friends.

His birthplace was the home which Thomas Stevenson had prepared for his bride two years before; a small, unpretentious, comfortable stone house, forming part of a row still standing, situated on low ground just to the north of the Water of Leith. Two and a half years later this was changed for No. 1 Inverleith Terrace, a more commodious dwelling on the other side of the same road; but that, having three outside walls, proved too cold for the delicate boy. Accordingly, in 1857, the little family of three—for Louis remained an only child—moved half a mile further south into what was then the centre of the New Town, and occupied No. 17 Heriot Row, which continued to be their home in Edinburgh for thirty years. This was a substantial house of grey stone, built with the solidity so customary in Scotland and now so unusual in the South, looking across the Queen Street Gardens, where the lilacs bloom in spring and the pipe of the blackbird may still be heard; while from its back windows could be seen the hills of "the kingdom of Fife."

For the first year of his life the infant seemed healthy and made satisfactory progress. But with his mother's brightness of disposition he had unfortunately inherited also from her a weakness of chest and a susceptibility to cold, which affected the whole course of his life.

"My ill-health principally chronicles itself by the terrible long nights that I lay awake, troubled continually with a hacking, exhausting cough, and praying for sleep or morning from the bottom of my shaken little body. I principally connect these nights, how-

ever, with our third house, in Heriot Row; and cannot mention them without a grateful testimony to the unwearied sympathy and long-suffering displayed to me on a hundred such occasions by my good nurse. It seems to me that I should have died if I had been left there alone to cough and weary in the darkness. How well I remember her lifting me out of bed, carrying me to the window, and showing me one or two lit windows up in Queen Street across the dark belt of gardens; where also, we told each other, there might be sick little boys and their nurses waiting, like us, for the morning. Other night scenes connected with my ill-health were the little sallies of delirium that used to waken me out of a feverish sleep in such agony of terror as, thank God, I have never suffered since. My father had generally to come up and sit by my bedside, and feign conversations with guards or coachmen or inn-keepers, until I was gradually quieted and brought to myself; but it was long after one of those paroxysms before I could bear to be left alone."

"That I was eminently religious, there can be no doubt. I had an extreme terror of Hell, implanted in me, I suppose, by my good nurse, which used to haunt me terribly on stormy nights, when the wind had broken loose and was going about the town like a bedlamite. I remember that the noises on such occasions always grouped themselves for me into the sound of a horseman, or rather a succession of horsemen, riding furiously past the bottom of the street and away up the hill into town; I think even now that I hear the terrible *howl* of his passage, and the clink-

ing that I used to attribute to his bit and stirrups. On such nights I would lie awake and pray and cry, until I prayed and cried myself asleep; and if I can form any notion of what an earnest prayer should be, I imagine that mine were such. . . .

"Although I was never done drawing and painting, and even kept on doing so until I was seventeen or eighteen, I never had any real pictorial vision, and instead of trying to represent what I saw, was merely imitating the general appearance of other people's representations. I never drew a picture of anything that was before me, but always from fancy, a sure sign of the absence of artistic eyesight; and I beautifully illustrated my lack of real feeling for art, by a very early speech: 'Mamma,' said I, 'I have drawed a man. Shall I draw his soul now?'"

His nurse was, it will already be seen, even more than is usual with children, an important factor in his life. When he was eighteen months old, Alison Cunningham—"Cummie" to him for the rest of his days—came to him and watched over his childhood with the most intense devotion. She refused, it is said, an offer of marriage, that she might not have to leave her charge, and she remained with the family long after the care of him had passed out of women's hands, never taking another place, as indeed she had no need to do.[1] Her true reward has been a monument of gratitude for which a parallel is hard to find. At twenty (an age when young men are not generally very tender to such memories) Louis wrote the paper on Nurses printed in *Juvenilia*. Fifteen years

[1] She died in July, 1913, aged 91.

later the dedication of the *Child's Garden* was "To Alison Cunningham, From Her Boy," and this was but the preface to one of the happiest sets of verses in one of the happiest books. Of all his works he sent her copies; throughout his life he wrote letters to her; when he had a house, he had her to stay with him, and even proposed to bring her out on a visit to Samoa. In another fragment of autobiography he has again described her services: "My recollection of the long nights when I was kept awake by coughing are only relieved by the thought of the tenderness of my nurse and second mother (for my first will not be jealous), Alison Cunningham. She was more patient than I can suppose of an angel; hours together she would help and console me . . . till the whole sorrow of the night was at an end with the arrival of the first of that long string of country carts, that in the dark hours of the morning, with the neighing of horses, the cracking of the whips, the shouts of drivers, and a hundred other wholesome noises, creaked, rolled, and pounded past my window."

Thus she tended his bodily life, watchfully and unweariedly: to his spiritual welfare, as she conceived it, she gave, if possible, even greater care. His father and mother were both genuinely religious people: the former clung, with a desperate intensity, to the rigid tenets of his faith; the latter was a true "child of the manse," and visited and befriended churches and missions wherever she went. But if Louis spent, as he tells us, "a Covenanting childhood," it was to Cummie that this was due. Besides the Bible and

the Shorter Catechism, which he had also from his mother, Cummie filled him with a love of her own favourite authors, M'Cheyne and others, Presbyterians of the straitest doctrine. It was she, in all probability, who first introduced him to "The Cameronian Dream." That poem, he afterwards told Edmund Gosse, made the most indelible impression on his fancy, and was the earliest piece of literature which awakened in him the sentiment of romantic Scottish history.

From her, too, he first heard some of the writings of the Covenanters, Wodrow, Peden, and others, who directly influenced his choice of subjects, and according to his own testimony (*Letters*, iv. 266) had a great share in the formation of his style. A special favourite also was an old copy of *A Cloud of Witnesses*, which had belonged to his nurse's grandmother.

In matters of conduct Cummie was for no half-measures. Cards were the Devil's books. Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson played whist, decorous family whist —the mother had the keenest zest for all games— and Louis could remember praying fervently with his nurse that it might not be visited on them to their perdition. The novel and the playhouse were alike anathema to her; and this would seem no very likely opening for the career of one who was to be a novelist and write plays as well. For her pupil entered fully into the spirit of her ordinances, and insisted on a most rigorous observance of her code.

In spite of her restrictions, Cummie was full of life and merriment. She danced and sang to her boy, and read to him most dramatically. She herself tells

how, the last time she ever saw him, he said to her "before a room full of people, 'It's *you* that gave me a passion for the drama, Cummie.' 'Me, Master Lou,' I said; 'I never put foot inside a playhouse in my life.' 'Ay, woman,' said he; 'but it was the grand dramatic way ye had of reciting the hymns.'"

It was in the end of 1856 that Louis was for the first time experiencing "the toils and vigils and distresses" of composition. His uncle, David Stevenson, offered to his children and nephews a prize for the best history of Moses. Louis was allowed to try for it by dictating his version to his mother, and to this he devoted five successive Sunday evenings. A Bible picture-book was given to him as an extra prize, and, adds his mother, "from that time forward it was the desire of his heart to be an author."

For this he had already a qualification, which children either seldom possess, or of which at any rate they but seldom remember the possession. In a late reminiscence he greatly applauds his nurse's ear and speaks of her reading to him "the works of others as a poet would scarce dare to read his own; gloating on the rhythm, dwelling with delight on the assonances and alliterations." So he tells us of the delight he already took in words for their own sake, and of the thrill which the mere sound of "Jehovah Tsidkenu" produced in him without reference to any possible meaning. To the same source I must refer for his account of the imagery called up in his mind from local surroundings by the metrical version of the twenty-third Psalm; the "pastures green" being

stubble-fields by the Water of Leith, and "death's dark vale" a certain archway in the Warriston Cemetery.

But in these suburbs only a part of his childhood was spent. Of other and happier playing-places he has left a record, written probably about 1872, and manifestly the quarry from which was drawn most of the material for "The Manse" in *Memories and Portraits.*

From this it may be seen that Stevenson, alike at two-and-twenty and at five-and-thirty, remembered his childhood as it is given to few grown men and women to remember, and the paper contains the raw material or perhaps rather the prose version of many passages in the *Child's Garden of Verses.*

"One consequence of my ill-health was my frequent residence at Colinton Manse. Out of my reminiscences of life in that dear place, all the morbid and painful elements have disappeared. That was my golden age: *et ego in Arcadia vixi.* There is something so fresh and wholesome about all that went on at Colinton, compared with what I recollect of the town, that I can hardly, even in my own mind, knit the two chains of reminiscences together; they look like stories of two different people, ages apart in time and quite dissimilar in character."

"The Water of Leith, after passing under Colinton Bridge, makes a curve, following the line of the high, steep, wooded bank on the convex, but on the concave enclosing a round flat promontory, which was once, I suppose, a marsh, and then a riverside meadow. . . . Immediately after crossing the bridge the roadway

forks into two; one branch whereof tends upward to the entrance of the churchyard; while the other, green with grass, slopes downward, between two blank walls and past the cottage of the snuff-mill, to the gate of the manse.

"There were two ways of entering the manse garden: one the two-winged gate that admitted the old phaeton, and the other a door for pedestrians on the side next the kirk. . . .

. . . "In the garden on summer afternoons the sloping lawn was literally *steeped* in sunshine; and all the day long, from the impending wood, there came the sweetest and fullest chorus of merles and thrushes and all manner of birds, that it ever was my lot to hear. The lawn was just the centre of all this—a perfect goblet for sunshine, and the Dionysius' ear for a whole forest of bird-songs. This lawn was a favourite playground; a lilac that hung its scented blossom out of the glossy semicirque of laurels was identified by my playmates and myself as that tree whose very shadow was death. In the great laurel at the corner I have often lain *perdu*, with a toy-gun in my hand, waiting for a herd of antelopes to defile past me down the carriage drive, and waiting (need I add?) in vain. Down at the corner of the lawn next the snuff-mill wall there was a practicable passage through the evergreens and a door in the wall, which let you out on a small patch of sand, left in the corner by the river. Just across, the woods rose like a wall into the sky; and their lowest branches trailed in the black waters. Naturally, it was very sunless. . . . There was nothing around and above you but

the shadowy foliage of trees. It seemed a marvel how they clung to the steep slope on the other side; and, indeed, they were forced to grow far apart, and showed the ground between them hid by an undergrowth of butter-bur, hemlock, and nettle. . . . I wish I could give you an idea of this place, of the gloom, of the black slow water, of the strange wet smell, of the draggled vegetation on the far side whither the current took everything, and of the incomparably fine, rich yellow sand, without a grit in the whole of it, and moving below your feet with scarcely more resistance than a liquid. . . . I remember climbing down one day to a place where we discovered an island of this treacherous material. O the great discovery! On we leapt in a moment; but on feeling the wet, sluicy island flatten out into a level with the river, and the brown water gathering about our feet, we were off it again as quickly. It was a 'quicksand,' we said; and thenceforward the island was held in much the same regard as the lilac-tree on the lawn.

"The wall of the church faces to the manse, but the churchyard is on a level with the top of the wall, that is to say, some eight or ten feet above the garden, and the tombstones are visible from the enclosure of the manse. The church, with its campanile, was near the edge, so that on Sundays we could see the cluster of people about the door. Under the retaining wall was a somewhat dark pathway, extending from the stable to the far end of the garden, and called 'The Witches' Walk,' from a game we used to play in it. At the stable end it took its rise under a yew.

which is one of the glories of the village. Under the circuit of its wide, black branches, it was always dark and cool, and there was a green scurf over all the trunk among which glistened the round bright drops of resin. . . . This was a sufficiently gloomy commencement for the Witches' Walk; but its chief horror was the retaining wall of the kirkyard itself, about which we were always hovering at even with the strange attraction of fear. Often after nightfall have I looked long and eagerly from the manse windows to see the 'spunkies' playing among the graves, and have been much chagrined at my failure; and this very name of spunkie recalls to me the most important of our discoveries in the supernatural walk. Henrietta, Willie (my cousins) and I, just about dusk, discovered a burning eye looking out from a hole in the retaining wall, in the corner where it joins the back of the stable. In hushed tones we debated the question; whether it was some bird of ill omen roosting in the cranny of the wall, or whether the hole pierced right through into a grave, and it was some dead man who was sitting up in his coffin and watching us with that strange fixed eye. If you remember the level of the churchyard, you will see that this explanation suited pretty well; so we drew a wheelbarrow into the corner; one after another got up and looked in; and when the last was satisfied, we turned round, took to our heels, and never stopped till we were in the shelter of the house. We ourselves, in our after-discussions, thought it might have been the bird, though we preferred the more tremendous explanation. But for my own part, I sim-

ply believe that we saw nothing at all. The fact is, we would have given anything to have seen a ghost, or to persuade ourselves that we had seen a ghost. . . . I remember going down into the cellars of our own house intown, in company with another, . . . and persuading myself that I saw a face looking at me from round a corner; and I may even confess, since the laws against sorcery have been for some time in abeyance, that I essayed at divers times to bring up the devil, founding my incantations on no more abstruse a guide than Skelt's *Juvenile Drama of Der Freischütz.* I am about at the end of horrors now; even out of the Witches' Walk, you saw the manse facing towards you, with its back to the river and the wooded bank, and the bright flower-plots and stretches of comfortable vegetables in front and on each side of it; flower-plots and vegetable borders, by the way, on which it was almost death to set foot, and about which we held a curious belief—namely, that my grandfather went round and measured any footprints that he saw to compare the measurement at night with the boots put out for brushing; to avoid which we were accustomed, by a strategic movement of the foot, to make the mark longer. . . .

"So much for the garden; now follow me into the house. On entering by the front-door you had before you a stone-paved lobby, with doors on either hand, that extended the whole length of the house. There stood a case of foreign birds, two or three marble deities from India, and a lily of the Nile in a pot; and at the far end the stairs shut in the view. . . . With how many games of "tig" or brick-building in

the forenoon is the long low dining-room connected in my mind.

. . . "But that room is principally dear to me from memories of the time when I, a sickly child, stayed there alone. First, in the forenoon about eleven, how my aunt[1] used to open the storeroom at the one end and give me out three Albert biscuits and some calf-foot jelly in a black pot with a sort of raised white pattern over it. That storeroom was a most voluptuous place with its piles of biscuit boxes and spice tins, the rack for buttered eggs, the little window that let in sunshine and the flickering shadow of leaves.

. . . "But I come to the crown of my dining-room reminiscences, for after dinner, when the lamp was brought in and shaded, and my aunt sat down to read in the rocking-chair, there was a great open space behind the sofa left entirely in the shadow. This was my especial domain: once round the corner of the sofa, I had left the lightsome, merry indoors, and was out in the cool, dark night. I could

[1] "I have mentioned my aunt. In her youth she was a wit and a beauty, very imperious, managing and self-sufficient. But as she grew up, she began to suffice for all the family as well. An accident on horseback made her nearly deaf and blind, and suddenly transformed this wilful empress into the most serviceable and amiable of women. There were thirteen of the Balfours as (oddly enough) there were of the Stevensons also, and the children of the family came home to her to be nursed, to be educated, to be mothered, from the infanticidal climate of India. There must sometimes have been half a score of us children about the manse; and all were born a second time from Aunt Jane's tenderness." Jane Whyte Balfour, "chief of our Aunts," of *A Child's Garden of Verses*, died at the age of ninety-one in 1907, the last of her generation, stone deaf and nearly blind, but with a keener interest in all belonging to her than any of her juniors, and a greater zest in life.

almost see the stars. I looked out of the back window at the bushes outside. I lay in the darkest corners, rifle in hand, like a hunter in a lonely bivouac. I crawled about stealthily watching the people in the circle of lamplight, with some vague remembrance of a novel that my aunt had read to me, where some fellow went out from 'the heated ballroom' and moralised in the 'Park.'"

His mother and his nurse also, as we have seen, read to him, indefatigably, and so it was not until he was eight years old that he took any pleasure in reading to himself. The consciousness of this delight came upon him suddenly; its coming was connected in his memory with a book called *Paul Blake*, "a visit to the country, and an experience unforgettable. The day had been warm; Henrietta and I had played together charmingly all day in a sandy wilderness across the road; then came the evening with a great flash of colour and a heavenly sweetness in the air. Somehow my playmate had vanished, or is out of the story, as the sagas say, but I was sent into the village on an errand; and, taking a book of fairy-tales, went down alone through a fir-wood, reading as I walked. How often since then has it befallen me to be happy even so; but that was the first time: the shock of that pleasure I have never since forgot, and if my mind serves me to the last, I never shall; for it was then that I knew that I loved reading."

This day must have been followed closely by the evening recorded in another essay. "Out of all the years of my life I can recall but one home-coming to compare with these (when he returned with some new

play for his toy-theatre), and that was on the night when I brought back with me the *Arabian Entertainments* in the fat, old, double-columned volume with the prints. I was just well into the story of the Hunchback, I remember, when my clergyman grandfather (a man we counted pretty stiff) came in behind me. I grew blind with terror. But instead of ordering the book away, he said he envied me. Ah, well he might."

Although an only child and rendered more solitary by illness, Louis was not without companions, drawn (as often happens in early years) chiefly from the crowded ranks of his cousins, of whom he was nearly sure to find some at Colinton. By them he seems to have been treated, as Sir Sidney Colvin so happily says, "as something of a small sickly prince;" over them he cast the spell of his imagination in devising games, and they submitted to the force of his character in accepting the rules which he saw fit to allot. "We children had naturally many plays together," he says of Colinton; "I usually insisted on the lead, and was invariably exhausted to death by the evening. I can still remember what a fury of play would descend upon me." Of his games he wrote: "I was the best player of hide and seek going; not a good runner, I was up to every shift and dodge, I could jink very well, I could crawl without any noise through leaves, I could hide under a carrot plant; it used to be my favourite boast that I always *walked* into the den."

The country and the summer months gave him more companions, but the whole winter of 1856–57

was spent in Heriot Row by the most brilliant of them all, the one who had most in common with Louis, and of all his kin was his closest friend in after-life, Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson, the only son of his uncle Alan. He was the cousin of *Child's Play*, who ate his porridge "with sugar, and explained it to be a country continually buried under snow," while Louis took his "with milk, and explained it to be a country suffering gradual inundation."

"We lived together in a purely visionary state," wrote Louis, "and were never tired of dressing up."

It was during this winter and in this company that Louis, at the age of six, first entered the realms of gold described in "A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured" (*Memories and Portraits*), the region of the toy-theatre and the "scenery of Skeltdom." The romance of purchasing the plays for himself came a little later, for during these months he could hardly leave the house; but now began the delight in the book and the *dramatis personæ*. Years afterwards he described himself as "no melodramatist, but a Skelt-drunken boy; the man who went out to find the Eldorado of romantic comedy." Now also began the joys of illumination. Now he painted the characters "with crimson-lake (hark to the sound of it—crimson-lake!—the horns of elf-land are not richer on the ear)—with crimson-lake and Prussian blue a certain purple is to be compounded, which, for cloaks especially, Titian could not equal."

The last of his reminiscences of childish days that I have to give was written in Samoa, and describes, with all the resources of his perfected art, a state of mind

more subtle and tragic than any that we are accustomed to associate with the confines of infancy.

"I was born within the walls of that dear city of Zeus, of which the lightest and (when he chooses) the tenderest singer of my generation sings so well. I was born likewise within the bounds of an earthly city, illustrious for her beauty, her tragic and picturesque associations, and for the credit of some of her brave sons. Writing as I do in a strange quarter of the world, and a late day of my age, I can still behold the profile of her towers and chimneys, and the long trail of her smoke against the sunset; I can still hear those strains of martial music that she goes to bed with, ending each day, like an act of an opera, to the notes of bugles; still recall, with a grateful effort of memory, any one of a thousand beautiful and specious circumstances that pleased me, and that must have pleased anyone, in my half-remembered past. It is the beautiful that I thus actively recall; the august airs of the castle on its rock, nocturnal passages of lights and trees, the sudden song of the blackbird in a suburban lane, rosy and dusky winter sunsets, the uninhabited splendours of the early dawn, the building up of the city on a misty day, house above house, spire above spire, until it was received into a sky of softly glowing clouds, and seemed to pass on and upwards, by fresh grades and rises, city beyond city, a New Jerusalem, bodily scaling heaven. . . .

"Memory supplies me, unsolicited, with a mass of other material, where there is nothing to call beauty, nothing to attract—often a great deal to disgust.

There are trite street corners, commonplace, well-to-do houses, shabby suburban tan-fields, rainy beggarly slums, taken in at a gulp nigh forty years ago, and surviving to-day, complete sensations, concrete, poignant and essential to the genius of the place. From the melancholy of these remembrances I might suppose them to belong to the wild and bitterly unhappy days of my youth. But it is not so; they date, most of them, from early childhood; they were observed as I walked with my nurse, gaping on the universe, and striving vainly to piece together in words my inarticulate but profound impressions. I seem to have been born with a sentiment of something moving in things, of an infinite attraction and horror coupled."

CHAPTER IV

BOYHOOD—1859–1867

"Not all roads lead to Rome—only that you have begun to travel."—R. L. S., Aphorism.

IT was not till 1859 that the boy's continuous schooling began, but to his formal education little or no importance attaches. The changes of his teachers were frequent, his absences from school innumerable, but both were due almost entirely to his health, and especially his susceptibility to colds. In the autumn of 1857 he had gone to Mr. Henderson's preparatory school in India Street, in the near neighbourhood of his home, as all his day-schools were. After a few weeks he had to give it up, and did not return there till October 1859. In 1861 he was transferred to the Edinburgh Academy, then, as now, the leading school of Edinburgh; there he spent a year and a half under D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, author of *Day Dreams of a Schoolmaster* and other works, a teacher with views far in advance of his day, and subsequently for many years Professor of Greek in the Queen's College, Galway. Then for one term, his mother being abroad, he was sent to an English boarding-school at Spring Grove, Isleworth, in Middlesex. Finally, in 1864, he was again shifted—to a day-school kept by Robert Thomson in Frederick Street, Edinburgh, which he attended

with more or less regularity until he went to the University in 1867.

Besides his ordinary classes he had many tutors for longer or shorter periods, in Edinburgh and elsewhere, both when he was unable to leave the house, and also in order to supplement and help his school-work, a custom prevalent in Scotland.

The teachers who gave him private lessons spoke of his intelligence in high terms, but in large classes he evaded the eye of the master and drew on himself as little notice as possible. The Reverend Peter Rutherford, who taught him when he was at Mr. Henderson's, says: "He was without exception the most delightful boy I ever knew; full of fun, full of tender feeling; ready for his lessons, ready for a story, ready for fun;" and the master of the Burgh School of Peebles, who gave him lessons in 1864, found him the most intelligent and best informed boy in all his experience. A glowing interest in any subject that took his fancy marked his earliest boyhood no less than his later years. But if he was bright and ready when he was interested, his attention was often short-lived, and to many of the subjects in his curriculum it never was given at all. In every language that he ever learned, the rules of its grammar remained unknown to him, however correctly he might use its idioms, and the spelling of his own tongue was dark to him to the very last. Latin, French, and mathematics seem to have been everywhere the staple of his education. German he began with a private tutor in 1865 at Torquay, where he also received his only lessons in ordinary drawing.

The only prize that ever fell to him was at Mr. Henderson's school for his reading, which was commended, as he tells us, with the criticism: "Robert's voice, though not strong, is impressive."

On the physical side of his education, dancing, despite the Covenanters, was persistently taught him with but scanty success: riding he learned chiefly in the summers of 1865 and 1866, though he first had a pony in 1856. In 1860 and 1864 he was bathing with great enjoyment, and in the latter year he was also rowing on the Tweed. But of games proper there is little mention. From Spring Grove he wrote: "Yesterday I was playing at football. I have never played at cricket, so papa may comfort himself with that. I like football very much." Against this we have to set his confession that even at football "I knew at least one little boy who was mightily exercised about the presence of the ball, and had to spirit himself up, whenever he came to play, with an elaborate story of enchantment, and take the missile as a sort of talisman bandied about in conflict between two Arabian nations." And at North Berwick he says: "You might golf if you wanted, but I seem to have been better employed."

But if his health were unequal to constant schoolwork or severe exercise, it greatly improved after 1863, and did not disable him from other boyish pursuits. Already, in 1857, his mother had written: "Louis is getting very wild and like a boy." In 1864 she records that "Whatever there was in him of 'Puck' came very much to the front this summer. He was the leader of a number of boys who went

about playing tricks on all the neighbours on Springhill, tapping on their windows after nightfall," and all manner of wild freaks. The following year at Peebles he became a reckless rider. A girl companion of those days recollected the time "when my brother Bob, Louis, and I used to ride together. Bob had a black pony, and Louis called it 'Hell'; his own was brown, and was called 'Purgatory'; while mine was named 'Heaven.' Once the two boys galloped right through the Tweed on the way to Innerleithen, and I had to follow in fear of my life—poor 'Heaven' had the worst of it on that occasion."

"In this year, too," says Louis himself, "at the ripe age of fourteen years, I bought a certain cudgel, got a friend to load it, and thenceforward walked the tame ways of the earth my own ideal, radiating pure romance—still but a puppet in the hand of Skelt."

Nor was another element wanting. He speaks of Neidpath Castle in the close vicinity of Peebles, "bosomed in hills on a green promontory: Tweed at its base running through the gamut of a busy river, from the pouring shallow to the brown pool. In the days when I was thereabouts, that part of the earth was made a heaven to me by many things now lost, by boats and bathing, and the fascination of streams, and the delights of comradeship and those (surely the prettiest and simplest) of a boy and girl romance."

Earlier experiences belonging to North Berwick and the autumn of 1862 are described in *Memories and Portraits*; these included fishing, bathing, wading, and "crusoeing"—"a word that covers all extempore eating in the open air: digging, perhaps, a

house under the margin of the links, kindling a fire of the sea-ware and cooking apples there." But the crown of all was the business of the lantern-bearers, a sport which was afterwards to Stevenson the type of all that was anti-realist and romantic.

"Toward the end of September, when school-time was drawing near and the nights were already black, we would begin to sally from our respective villas, each equipped with a tin bull's-eye lantern. The thing was so well known that it had worn a rut in the commerce of Great Britain; and the grocers, about the due time, began to garnish their windows with our particular brand of luminary. We wore them buckled to the waist upon a cricket belt, and over them, such was the rigour of the game, a buttoned top-coat. They smelled noisomely of blistered tin; they never burned aright, though they would always burn our fingers; their use was naught; the pleasure of them merely fanciful; and yet a boy with a bull's-eye under his top-coat asked for nothing more. The fishermen used lanterns about their boats, and it was from them, I suppose, that we had got the hint; but theirs were not bull's-eyes, nor did we ever play at being fishermen. The police carried them at their belts, and we had plainly copied them in that; yet we did not pretend to be policemen. Burglars, indeed, we may have had some haunting thoughts of; and we certainly had an eye to past ages when lanterns were more common, to certain story-books in which we had found them to figure very largely. But take it for all in all, the pleasure of the thing was substantive; and to be a boy with

a bull's-eye under his top-coat was good enough for us.

"When two of these asses met, there would be an anxious 'Have you got your lantern?' and a gratified 'Yes.' That was the shibboleth, and very needful, too; for, as it was the rule to keep our glory contained, none could recognise a lantern-bearer, unless (like a polecat) by the smell. Four or five would sometimes climb into the belly of a ten-man lugger, with nothing but the thwarts above them—for the cabin was usually locked—or choose out some hollow of the links where the wind might whistle overhead. There the coats would be unbuttoned and the bull's-eyes discovered; and in the chequering glimmer, under the huge windy hall of the night, and cheered by a rich steam of toasting tinware, these fortunate young gentlemen would crouch together in the cold sand of the links or on the scaly bilges of the fishing-boat, and delight themselves with inappropriate talk."

Meanwhile, apart from his schools, the boy was gaining a wider knowledge of the world and having his first experiences of travel. In Scotland his long summer holidays were spent in the country much as before, until the Manse at Colinton began to "shield a stranger race." Now at some time he paid a visit to one of his uncles in the parish of Stow, on which, perhaps, he afterwards drew in *Weir of Hermiston* for his knowledge of the Lammermuirs. In 1857 he had crossed the Border with his parents for the first time, and visited the English Lakes. In 1862, the year of the second International Exhibition, his father's health brought the family to London and the

South of England, and Louis saw not only the sights of the capital, but also Salisbury, Stonehenge, and the Isle of Wight. In July, the same cause took them all for a month to Homburg, which Louis liked very well, though he wearied sorely for the company of other boys. But this was only the beginning of his wanderings: in the winter of the same year Mrs. Stevenson was ordered to Mentone, and it was decided that her husband, her son, and a niece of Mr. Stevenson's should accompany her. Thither they went in January, and there they stayed two months. In March they made a tour through Genoa, Naples, Rome, Florence, Venice, and Innsbruck, returning home by the Rhine. His mother stayed behind in England, and Louis travelled from London by himself for the first time, reaching Edinburgh on the 29th of May.

In the autumn he accompanied his father on a brief tour of lighthouse inspection in Fife, and on one day they visited seventeen lights.

At Christmas 1863 Mrs. Stevenson was again at Mentone; there Louis joined her from his boarding-school and they remained in the Riviera till the beginning of May. The two next springs were passed by mother and son at Torquay, but after that it proved unnecessary for them to leave Scotland for any part of the winter. For the last three winters they were joined by Miss Jessie Warden, another niece of Mr. Stevenson, a clever and original girl, just grown to womanhood. In 1867, to their great grief, she died; she had filled an important part in their small circle, had been a delightful companion

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to Louis, and always held a bright place in his memory.

The curious point about the foreign journeys is that they seem to have had very little manifest influence upon Stevenson, and to have passed almost entirely out of his mind.

His cousin Mrs. Napier, who was one of the party in 1863, recollected very distinctly how much he developed at this period. "In some ways," she wrote, "he was more like a boy of sixteen. My uncle had a great belief (inherited from his father) in the educational value of travel, and to this end and for the benefit of Louis he devoted his whole energies in the five months abroad. In the hotel at Nice he began to take Louis to the smoking-room with him; there my uncle was always surrounded by a group of eager and amused listeners—English, American, and Russian—and every subject, political, artistic, and theological, was discussed and argued. Uncle Tom's genial manner found friends wherever he went, and the same sort of thing went on during the whole journey. Then in regard to what we saw, his keen admiration of art and architecture seemed to be shared by Louis; they would go into raptures over a cathedral, or an old archway, or a picture. I still remember Louis' eager interest in Pompeii and in the Catacombs at Rome; Venice, too, he specially enjoyed. In some of his books there are touches which his mother and I both recognised as due to places and persons seen in that long past journey. And in the Vailima prayers I seem to hear again an old melody that I know well—the echo of his father's words and daily devotions."

Yet nowhere, so far as I know, did Louis allude to any of the more famous towns he then visited, as if they had come within his personal ken. Horatio Brown frequently discussed Venice with him at Davos, but without even discovering that he had ever set foot in Italy. Rome meant to Stevenson in after-life a great deal: the Roman Empire was far more of a reality to him than to many better scholars and many frequenters of the city of Rome. Yet Mr. Lloyd Osbourne tells me that the only reference he ever heard his step-father make to this time was on one occasion when he recalled with delight the picturesque appearance of their military escort in horsemen's cloaks riding through the Papal States. Five years later his correspondence proves him already a keen observer, and yet half an hour with a guide-book would have furnished him with all the knowledge of Italian cities that he ever displayed.

But if his stores of experience were but little increased by these changes of scene, at least the boy was learning to exercise the *savoir-faire* which came very naturally to his disposition. At hotels he used to go to the table d'hôte alone, if necessary, and made friends freely with strangers. On his return from Homburg, he made great friends on the steamer with a Dutchman, who kept saying over to himself, "I loike this booy." His French master at Mentone on his second visit gave him no regular lessons, but merely talked to him in French, teaching him piquet and card tricks, introducing him to various French people, and taking him to convents and other places.

So his mother remarks of his other masters at home, "I think they found it pleasanter to talk to him than to teach him."

Of the other side of his character, of the solitary, dreamy, rather unhappy child, but little record survives, or little evidence which can be assigned with certainty to these years. In one of his books he touches a chord which thrills with a personal emotion as he describes, "a malady most incident to only sons." "He flew his private signal and none heeded it; it seemed he was abroad in a world from which the very hope of intimacy was banished." It was a slightly older lad of whom he was thinking at the moment, but the malady begins at an early age, and tends unfortunately to be chronic.

His reading progressed: for the date of his first introduction to Shakespeare there seems to be no evidence, and but for the strength of its impression it may have belonged to the earlier period. "I never supposed that a book was to command me until, one disastrous day of storm, the heaven full of turbulent vapours, the street full of the squalling of the gale, the windows resounding under bucketfuls of rain, my mother read aloud to me *Macbeth*. I cannot say I thought the experience agreeable; I far preferred the ditch-water stories that a child could dip and skip and doze over, stealing at times materials for play; it was something new and shocking to be thus ravished by a giant, and I shrank under the brutal grasp. But the spot in memory is still sensitive; nor do I ever read that tragedy but I hear the gale howling up the valley of the Leith."

His first acquaintance with Dumas began in 1863 with the study of certain illustrated dessert plates in a hotel at Nice: his first enthusiasm for Scott's novels belongs with certainty to the time when he had begun to select his books for himself.

"My father's library was a spot of some austerity; the proceedings of learned societies, some Latin divinity, cyclopædias, physical science, and, above all, optics, held the chief place upon the shelves, and it was only in holes and corners that anything really legible existed as by accident. The *Parent's Assistant*, *Rob Roy*, *Waverley*, and *Guy Mannering*, the *Voyages of Captain Woodes Rogers*. Fuller's and Bunyan's *Holy Wars*, *The Reflections of Robinson Crusoe*, *The Female Bluebeard*, G. Sand's *Mare au Diable* (how came it in that grave assembly!), Ainsworth's *Tower of London*, and four old volumes of *Punch*—these were the chief exceptions. . . . Time and again I tried to read *Rob Roy*, with whom, of course, I was acquainted from the *Tales of a Grandfather;* time and again the early part with Rashleigh and (think of it!) the adorable Diana, choked me off; and I shall never forget the pleasure and surprise with which, lying on the floor one summer evening, I struck of a sudden into the first scene with Andrew Fairservice. 'The worthy Dr. Lightfoot'—'mystrysted with a bogle'—'a wheen green trash'—'Jenny, lass, I think I ha'e her'; from that day to this the phrases have been unforgotten. I read on, I need scarce say; I came to Glasgow, I bided tryst on Glasgow Bridge, I met Rob Roy and the Bailie in the Tolbooth, all with transporting pleasure; and then

the clouds gathered once more about my path; and I dozed and skipped until I stumbled half-asleep into the Clachan of Aberfoyle, and the voices of Iverach and Galbraith recalled me to myself. With that scene and the defeat of Captain Thornton the book concluded; Helen and her sons shocked even the little schoolboy of nine or ten with their unreality; I read no more, or I did not grasp what I was reading; and years elapsed before I consciously met Diana and her father among the hills, or saw Rashleigh dying in the chair. When I think of that novel and that evening, I am impatient with all others; they seem but shadows and imposters; they cannot satisfy the appetite which this awakened."

What neither instruction nor travel could do for him was none the less coming about; the boy was educating himself; learning to write patiently, persistently, without brilliance or any apparent prospect of success. The History of Moses of 1856 had been followed the next year by a History of Joseph, after a brief interval devoted to a story "in slavish imitation of Mayne Reid." Two years later came an account (still dictated) of his travels in Perth. Before thirteen he wrote a description of the inhabitants of Peebles in the style of the *Book of Snobs*. When he was fourteen he developed a facility for extemporising doggerel rhymes, and composed the libretto of an opera called *The Baneful Potato*, of which only the names of two characters survive—"Dig-him-up-o," the gardener, and "Seek-him-out-o," the policeman, and the first line of an aria sung by the heroine, "My own dear casement window."

At his last school and in his home circle he was always starting magazines. These were all in manuscript, generally illustrated with profusion of colour, and were sometimes circulated at a charge of one penny for reading. *The Schoolboys' Magazine* of 1863, of which one number survives, contained four stories, and its readers must have been hard to satisfy if they did not have their fill of horrors. In the first tale, "The Adventures of Jan van Steen," the hero is left hidden in a boiler under which a fire is lit. The second is "A Ghost Story" of robbers in a deserted castle in "one of those barren places called plains in the north of Norway." A traveller finds a man, "half killed with several wounds," hidden under the floor, who dresses up as a ghost. The third story is called, by a curious anticipation, "The Wreckers." On the shore at North Berwick "were two men. The older and stronger of the two was a tall, ill-looking man with grizzled hair and a red nose. He was dressed in a tarnished, gold-laced, blue coat, a red waistcoat, and leggings. The other, who might have been a fisherman except for the fact that from each of the pockets of his pea-jacket there projected a pistol. He was a more villainous-looking fellow than the other. 'Dan,' said the first, 'what is that clinging to that mast?' 'I think,' said the other, 'it is a sailor. You had better go and secure him.'" Last and not least terrible is "Creek Island, or Adventures in the South Seas." A line-of-battle ship called the *Shark* is wrecked in the Southern Ocean on its way to India, and two midshipmen fall into the hands of the Indians. "They had a council which pronounced

death, but which death would we have to suffer? It was to be burned alive. . . . Next morning very early we had to get up and prepare to be burned alive. When we arrived at the place of execution, we shuddered to think of being killed so soon. But I forgot to tell you that I had made love to [*sic*] beautiful girl even in one day, and from all I knew she loved me. The next thing they did was to build round us sticks and rubbish of all kinds till we could hardly see what they were doing. At last they finished. They then set fire to it, and after it had got hold well, they began to dance, which is called a war-dance. (To be continued.)"

"*I forgot to tell you that I had made ove to beautiful girl.*" "Was ever woman in this humour wooed?" At least the author remembered his own boyish taste, when heroines were excluded from *Treasure Island*. And yet this was the hand that at the last drew Barbara Grant and the two Kirstie Elliotts.

In these days he had endless talks with Mr. H. B. Baildon, who seems to have been the first of his friends in whom he found a kindred interest in letters, and at one of these discussions he produced a drama which was apparently the earliest draft of *Deacon Brodie*. The story was familiar to him from childhood, as a cabinet made by the Deacon himself formed part of the furniture of his nursery. His deepest and most lasting interest was, however, centred in the Covenanters, of whom he had first learned from his nurse. He has told us how his attention was fixed on Hackston of Rathillet, who sat on horseback "with the cloak about his mouth," watch-

ng the assassination of Archbishop Sharp, in which
ne would take no part, lest it should be attributed to
nis private quarrel. Stevenson's first novel on the
subject was attempted before he was fifteen, and
'reams of paper," then and at a later date, were de-
voted to it in vain.

A similar fate attended a novel on the Pentland
Rising—an episode well known to him from his in-
fancy, as the Covenanters had spent the night before
their defeat in the village of Colinton.

This last composition, however, was not wholly
without result. Though the novel was destroyed,
his studies issued in a small green pamphlet, entitled
The Pentland Rising: a Page of History, 1666, pub-
lished anonymously, in 1866, by Andrew Elliot in
Edinburgh.

His aunt Jane Balfour wrote: "I was at Heriot
Row in 1866 from the 29th October to 23rd No-
vember, and Louis was busily altering the *Pentland
Rising* then to please his father. He had made a
story of it, and by so doing, had, in his father's opin-
ion, spoiled it. It was printed not long after in a
small edition, and Mr. Stevenson very soon bought
all the copies in, as far as was possible."

Thus the period closes somewhat surprisingly with
Stevenson's first appearance as a printed author.
The foundations were being well laid, but the struc-
ture raised upon them was premature. The publica-
tion was probably due to his father's approval of the
subject-matter rather than to any belief in the literary
ripeness of the style. At the same time, it was the
best work that he had yet done, and the plentiful

quotations from the pages of Wodrow and Kirkton; and of their opponent, Sir James Turner, are interesting in view of Stevenson's confession in Samoa, "My style is from the Covenanting writers."

CHAPTER V

STUDENT DAYS—1867–73

"Light foot, and tight foot,
And green grass spread,
Early in the morning,
But hope is on ahead."
R. L. S.

THE time had come for the boy to leave school, and for his education to be shaped in some conformity with the profession supposed to ie before him. What this would be was never for a noment in doubt. Father and sons, the Stevensons vere civil engineers, and to the grandsons naturally, n course of time, the business would be transferred. The family capacity for the work, though undeniable, vas very elusive, consisting chiefly of a sort of instinct or dealing with the forces of nature, and seldom nanifested clearly till called forth in actual practice. The latest recruit had certainly shown no conspicu- ous powers at any of his schools, but to such a cri- erion no one could have attached less value than his ather. That he did possess the family gift was proved before he left the profession; but even had ie never written his paper "On a New Form of In- ermittent Light," no one could reasonably have con- lemned on his behalf the choice of this career.

Accordingly, the next three and a half years were levoted to his preparation for this employment. He

spent the winter, and sometimes the summer, sessions at the University of Edinburgh, working for a Science degree, and saw something of the practical work of engineering during the other summer months.

For the first two years he attended the Latin class, Greek being abandoned as hopeless after the first session; to Natural Philosophy he was constant, so far as his constancy in such matters ever went; Mathematics then replaced Greek, and Civil Engineering took the room of Latin. But all this was none of his real education. Although he remembered that "the spinning of a top is a case of Kinetic Stability" (one of the few facts recorded in a notebook still surviving), and that "Emphyteusis is not a disease, nor Stillicide a crime," and would not willingly part with such scraps of science, he never "set the same store by them as by certain other odds and ends that he came by in the open street while he was playing truant." The last word recurs with every reference to his education. In fact, as far as the University was concerned, he "acted upon an extensive and highly rational system of truantry, which cost him a great deal of trouble to put in exercise;" and "no one ever played the truant with more deliberate care, and none ever had more certificates (of attendance) for less education."

In the summer of 1868 Stevenson spent the month of July at Anstruther, and the six weeks following at Wick: records of which he has left in various letters written to his parents at the time, and in the essay on "Random Memories" entitled "The Education of an Engineer." In the first-named place he was

privileged to hear it said of him for the first time, "That's the man that's in charge." At Wick, besides his descent in a diving-suit ("one of the best things I got from my education as an engineer") an accident afforded him one of those opportunities for prompt action, of which his life contained all too few. It comes as the postscript to a short business letter to his father.

"*September* 1868.

"*P.S.*—I was forgetting my only news. A man fell off the staging this forenoon. I heard crying, and ran out to the end. By that time a rope had been lowered and the man was holding himself up by it, and of course wearing himself out. Some were away for a boat. 'Hold on, Angus,' they cried. 'I can NOT do it,' he said, with wonderful composure. I told them to lower a plank; everybody was too busy giving advice to listen to me; meantime the man was drowning. I was desperate, and could have knocked another dozen off. One fellow, Bain, a diver, listened to me. We got the plank out and a rope round it; but they would not help us to lower it down. At last we got assistance, and were just about to lower it down, when some one cried, 'Hold your hand, lads! Here comes the boat.' And Angus was borne safely in. But my hand shook so, that I could not draw for some time after with the excitement.—R. S."

The following year he went with his father in the *Pharos*, the steamer of the Commissioners of Northern Lights, to Shetland, a part of the same cruise as

that on which his grandfather had attended Sir Walter Scott. It was years afterwards that mentioning a boat-cloak, the use of which belonged chiefly to these days, he said: "The proudest moments of my life have been passed in the stern-sheets of a boat with that romantic garment about my shoulders. This, without prejudice to one glorious day when, standing upon some water-stairs at Lerwick, I signalled with a pocket-handkerchief for a boat to come ashore for me. I was then aged fifteen or sixteen [eighteen]. Conceive my glory."

In 1870, besides a week at Dunoon, to look after some work that was being done there, and one or two expeditions with the University Engineering class, he spent three weeks on the little island of Earraid, off Mull, the scene of David Balfour's shipwreck. It was commemorated later in *Memories and Portraits*, but at this date it was the headquarters for the building of the deep-sea lighthouse of Dhu Heartach.

All this was the attractive part of his work. "As a way of life," he wrote, "I wish to speak with sympathy of my education as an engineer. It takes a man into the open air; it keeps him hanging about harbour-sides, which is the richest form of idling; it carries him to wild islands; it gives him a taste of the genial dangers of the sea; it supplies him with dexterities to exercise; it makes demands upon his ingenuity; it will go far to cure him of any taste (if he ever had one) for the miserable life of cities."

But even the open-air life had only a very slight hold upon him, as far as it was devoted to professional work. Nothing could be more convincing than the

little picture of his father and himself, given in the *Family of Engineers*.

"My father would pass hours on the beach, brooding over the waves, counting them, noting their least deflection, noting when they broke. On Tweedside, or by Lyne and Manor, we have spent together whole afternoons; to me, at the time, extremely wearisome; to him, as I am now sorry to think, extremely mortifying. The river was to me a pretty and various spectacle; I could not see—I could not be made to see—it otherwise. To my father it was a chequer-board of lively forces, which he traced from pool to shallow with minute appreciation and enduring interest. 'That bank was being undercut,' he might say. 'Why? Suppose you were to put a groin out here, would not the *filum fluminis* be cast abruptly off across the channel? and where would it impinge upon the other shore? and what would be the result? Or suppose you were to blast that boulder, what would happen? Follow it—use the eyes that God has given you: can you not see that a great deal of land would be reclaimed upon this side?' It was to me like school in holidays; but to him, until I had worn him out with my invincible triviality, a delight."

In Heriot Row he had now for his own use the two rooms on the top floor of his father's house, which had been his nurseries. The smaller chamber, to the east, was his bedroom, while the other held his books, and was used as his study as long as he lived in Edinburgh.

At the beginning of this period a change was made in the household arrangements, which was of material

service both to his health and also to his subsequent work. In May 1867 his father took the lease of a house known as Swanston Cottage, lying in a nook at the foot of the Pentland Hills, at a distance of some five miles from Edinburgh and two and a half from the boy's paradise of Colinton.

This was afterwards the home of the heroine of *St. Ives*, and in the *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh* its situation and history were described.

"Upon the main slope of the Pentlands . . . a bouquet of old trees stands round a white farmhouse; and from a neighbouring dell you can see smoke rising and leaves rustling in the breeze. Straight above, the hills climb a thousand feet into the air. The neighbourhood, about the time of lambs, is clamorous with the bleating of flocks; and you will be awakened in the grey of early summer mornings by the barking of a dog, or the voice of a shepherd shouting to the echoes. This, with the hamlet lying behind unseen, is Swanston. . . . Long ago, this sheltered field was purchased by the Edinburgh magistrates for the sake of the springs that rise or gather there. After they had built their water-house and laid their pipes, it occurred to them that the place was suitable for junketing. . . . The dell was turned into a garden; and on the knoll that shelters it from the plain and the sea winds, they built a cottage looking to the hills. They brought crockets and gargoyles from old St. Giles', which they were then restoring, and disposed them on the gables and over the door and about the garden; and the quarry which had supplied them with building material, they draped with clematis

and carpeted with beds of roses. In process of time the trees grew higher, and gave shade to the cottage, and the evergreens sprang up and turned the dell into a thicket."

Here for the next fourteen years the family spent a large part of their summers in place of taking a furnished house at North Berwick or elsewhere.

Hither at all seasons Louis would often retire alone or in the company of a friend; here he gained a knowledge of the Pentlands only to be acquired by living among them; here he saw something of the country folk, and enriched his vocabulary of Lallan; here made the acquaintance of John Todd the shepherd, and Robert Young the gardener, and the military beggarman who had a taste for Keats. This was to him *ille terrarum angulus* of *Underwoods*; on the hill above Swanston there lies the tiny pool, overhung by a rock, where he "loved to sit and make bad verses," and to this spot he asked his old nurse, four months before he finally left England, "some day to climb Halkerside for me (I am never likely to do it for myself), and sprinkle some of the well water on the turf."

Here one winter-tide he read Dumas again. "I would return in the early night from one of my patrols with the shepherd: a friendly face would meet me in the door, a friendly retriever scurry upstairs to fetch my slippers; and I would sit down with the *Vicomte de Bragelonne* for a long, silent, solitary, lamplit evening by the fire. . . . I would rise from my book and pull the blind aside, and see the snow and the glittering hollies chequer a Scottish garden, and the winter moonlight brighten the white hills."

Now he joined in various sports; at first he rode a good deal, and was even known to follow the hounds. At this time he skated, chiefly from Edinburgh, at Duddingston Loch. It was in these years that he was in Glenogil, in J. M. Barrie's country, and there caught as many as three dozen trout in one day, and forthwith forswore fishing. Now he made his first acquaintance with canoes, which at this time were introduced by Charles Baxter on the Firth of Forth. Sir Walter Simpson, the companion of the *Inland Voyage*, was another pioneer, and owned a large double canoe that often carried Stevenson, who had no boat of his own. His more experienced friends had no high opinion of his skill, but he occasionally joined them at Granton, and later at Queensferry, and spent many an afternoon in the fresh air of the Forth and the healthful employment of his paddle.

Conventional persons and conventional entertainments never had any attraction for him, and from general society in Edinburgh he was not long in withdrawing himself. There were exceptions of course; for several years after 1871 he took part in the private theatricals at Professor Fleeming Jenkin's house: at first as prompter, and afterwards in some minor parts, for he never was proficient as an actor. But mostly he preferred to see his friends apart from general company, and as for his clothes, of which a great deal has been said—he dressed to please himself.

He joined the University Conservative Club, an organisation for elections, and made his first speech at its dinner; he dined with his Academy class for

several years; and—more important than any of these—he was elected to the "Speculative Society"—that "Spec." of which the fame has gone abroad in the world largely by means of his writings.

"It is a body of some antiquity, and has counted among its members Scott, Jeffrey, Horner, Benjamin Constant, Robert Emmet, and many a legal and local celebrity besides. By an accident, variously explained, it has its rooms in the very buildings of the University of Edinburgh: a hall, Turkey-carpeted, hung with pictures, looking, when lighted up with fire and candle, like some goodly dining-room, a passage-like library, walled with books in their wire cages; and a corridor with a fireplace, benches, a table, many prints of famous members, and a mural tablet to the virtues of a former secretary. Here a member can warm himself and loaf and read; here, in defiance of Senatus-consults, he can smoke."

The Society is limited to thirty ordinary members, who acquire honorary privileges at the end of four years. Meetings are held once a week from November to March; first an essay is read and criticised, and then a motion is debated. The roll is called thrice on each of these evenings, and at each call every ordinary member is bound to be present; an elaborate system of procedure has grown up, fenced in with penalties and fines. Stevenson was elected a member on 16th February, 1869, and in the proceedings he took an increasing interest. During his first complete session he attended six, during the next eight, and during the third session thirteen out of nineteen meetings. And in 1873 he wrote to one

of his fellow-members: "O, I do think the Spec. is about the best thing in Edinburgh."

The "Spec." was probably the first place where Stevenson came into contact and rivalry with contemporaries who, being his equals, were not necessarily the friends of his own choice; and upon the members in general he seems to have made small impression. He was elected one of the five Presidents of the Society in 1872, but was at the bottom of the list and had only seven votes, whereas the first received eighteen, and the man next above him had thirteen supporters. In 1873 he was re-elected apparently without a contest; in his valedictory address, delivered in the same year, there is an amusing picture of the members, ending with a sketch of himself:—"Mr. Stevenson engaged in explaining to the other members that he is the cleverest person of his age and weight between this and California."

But while the external course of his life seemed smooth, the deeper current had far more troubled a stream. For one thing, as we have seen, he was not interested in engineering, and all the time he could spare from it was given up to the pursuit which had taken firm possession of him. The art of writing was his one concern, and to learn this he was giving all his real self.

There were, however, besides the misspending of his time and the misdirection of his labour, other difficulties that were far more grave. He had begun to work out for himself his own views of life: his religion and his ethics, his relations to society and his own place in the universe. He was following out the

needs of his mind and nature: strictly sincere with himself, he could never see things in their merely conventional aspect. He was "young in youth," and travelling at the fiery pace of his age and temperament; his senses were importunate, his intellect inquiring, and he must either find his own way, or, as he well might have done, lose it altogether.

Of all Stevenson's difficulties those concerned with religion were the most important, if for no other reason than that they alone affected his relations with his father. The one was questioning dogmas and observances which the other regarded it as impious to examine; and no sacrifice was too great for the father, no duty too arduous, if it could only avert from his child the doom of the freethinker. On the other hand, sooner than be tied to the doctrines of Calvinism, the lad called himself an atheist—such is ever the youthful formula of independence. Of the precise nature of his difficulties at this time he has left no record. He was revolting generally against doctrines held with severity and intolerance, and struggling for that wider view and larger conception of life, which he afterwards found to be less incompatible than he thought with the lessons of his earliest years.

He speaks of the startling effect that the Gospel of St. Matthew produced on him, but this seems to have been chiefly upon the social side. He was never at any time prone to compromise, and the discrepancy between Christ's teaching and the practice of Christian societies he was neither ready to explain away

nor able to ignore. As in religion he designated himself for the moment an atheist, so he seems in economics, if not in politics, to have become "a red-hot Socialist." The direction of his views was no doubt partly due to the "healthy democratic atmosphere" of the Scottish University system.

"At an early age the Scottish lad begins his . . . experience of crowded class-rooms, of a gaunt quadrangle, of a bell hourly booming over the traffic of the city to recall him from the public-house where he has been lunching, or the streets where he has been wandering fancy-free. His college life has little of restraint, and nothing of necessary gentility. He will find no quiet clique of the exclusive, studious, and cultured; no rotten borough of the arts. All classes rub shoulders on the greasy benches. The raffish young gentleman in gloves must measure his scholarship with the plain, clever, clownish laddie from the parish school."

Unfortunately the well-meant action of his parents added to his general unhappiness a touch of squalor. They were generosity itself; they provided for their son all that they thought a young man could possibly want. So long as he cared for such entertainments, they gave dinners and dances to his friends, whom they welcomed (if thought suitable) on all occasions to their house; for his health and education there was nothing they were not ready to do. One thing only was wanting to him, and that was liberty, or rather the means of using it. They knew how generous he was by nature, probably they guessed how open-handed he was likely to be, and until he was

three-and-twenty they restricted him—as others of his friends also were restricted—to half-a-crown or, at the most, five shillings a week as pocket-money. The result was that the lad went his own way, and frequented places which consorted with his means. This may have extended the future novelist's knowledge of man and woman and of the many aspects of human life, but it was scarcely a successful policy in his father's eyes (had he but known) which placed his son's headquarters at a tobacconist's shop, and sent him to the Lothian Road and a succession of such public-houses as "The Green Elephant," "The Twinkling Eye," and "The Gay Japanee."

Stevenson's own account of it ran thus:—

"I was always kept poor in my youth, to my great indignation at the time, but since then with my complete approval. Twelve pounds a year was my allowance up to twenty-three (which was indeed far too little), and though I amplified it by a very consistent embezzlement from my mother, I never had enough to be lavish. My monthly pound was usually spent before the evening of the day on which I received it; as often as not, it was forestalled; and for the rest of the time I was in rare fortune if I had five shillings at once in my possession. Hence my acquaintance was of what would be called a very low order. Looking back upon it, I am surprised at the courage with which I first ventured alone into the societies in which I moved; I was the companion of seamen, chimney-sweeps, and thieves; my circle was being continually changed by the action of the police magistrate. I see now the little sanded kitchen, where

Velvet Coat (for such was the name I went by) has spent days together, generally in silence and making sonnets in a penny version-book; and rough as the material may appear, I do not believe these days were among the least happy I have spent. I was distinctly petted and respected; the women were most gentle and kind to me; I might have left all my money for a month, and they would have returned every farthing of it. Such indeed was my celebrity, that when the proprietor and his mistress came to inspect the establishment, I was invited to tea with them; and it is still a grisly thought to me, that I have since seen that mistress then gorgeous in velvet and gold chains, an old, toothless, ragged woman, with hardly voice enough to welcome me by my old name of Velvet Coat."

The days were the days of green-sickness, and they were often miserable. Many a time he leaned over the great bridge which connects the New Town with the Old, and watched the trains smoking out from under him, and vanishing into the tunnel on a voyage to brighter skies. Often he haunted the station itself, envying the passengers; and again, "in the hot fits of youth," he went to the Calton burying-ground, "to be unhappy." "Poor soul," he says of himself, "I remember how much he was cast down at times, and how life (which had not yet begun) seemed already at an end, and hope quite dead, and misfortune and dishonour, like physical presences, dogging him as he went."

Yet the days were the days of youth, and often they were days of happiness. The clouds rolled away

in their season; most of the troubles were subjective, and though they were acutely felt, yet their ultimate solution was certain.

The one difficulty most immediately affecting his outer life—the pursuit of engineering—was, however, among the first to be solved. On April 8th, 1871, Louis told his father of his extreme disinclination for the work, and asked to be allowed to follow literature. It must have come as a heavy disappointment to Thomas Stevenson, who, as we have seen, was devoted to the practice of his calling. Moreover, only twelve days previously Louis had read before the Royal Scottish Society of Arts his first and only contribution to the literature of his profession, a paper on a New Form of Intermittent Light, which was afterwards judged "well worthy of the favourable consideration of the Society, and highly creditable to so young an author." The father felt the blow, but he must to some extent have been prepared for it by his son's entire lack of interest in the solution of problems which to him were the most entrancing in the world. He seems to have met the request with calm; his wife's diary records that he was "wonderfully resigned"; and the matter was compromised without difficulty or delay. Engineering was to be given up forthwith, but lest Louis should find himself with no other profession than that of "failed author," he was to read Law and to be called to the Scottish Bar. If he chose to practise, he would have his profession; his necessary legal and historical studies would add more or less to his general culture, and he would be able during his preparation

to carry on the literary training that was already occupying so large a portion of his time.

The general alleviation of his position was more gradual, but of this he has left an account, the fragment of a larger scheme of biography written in San Francisco in the beginning of 1880.

"I had a happy afternoon scrambling with Bob upon the banks of the Water of Leith above Slateford. And so I may leave this part of my life and take it up in another direction. At last I am now done with morbidity and can wash my hands.

"BOOK III.—FROM JEST TO EARNEST

"I date my new departure from three circumstances: natural growth, the coming of friends, and the study of Walt Whitman. The order or degree of their effectiveness I shall not seek to distinguish. But I shall first say something of my friends.

"My cousin Bob,[1] who had now, after a long absence, returned to Edinburgh, is the man likest and most unlike to me that I have ever met. Our likeness was one of tastes and passions, and, for many years at least, it amounted in these particulars to an identity. He had the most indefatigable, feverish mind I have ever known; he had acquired a smattering of almost

[1] Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson (1847–1900), son of Alan Stevenson (see p. 42), born in Edinburgh, educated at Windermere College and Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. He studied painting chiefly at Antwerp and in France, but became an art critic about 1885, and was (1885–9) Professor of Fine Arts at University College, Liverpool. But with pen or brush he never did full justice to his remarkable personality and powers of expression. York Powell writing in the *Saturday Review* in 1900 said: "We know what the joy was of the 'Mermaid' since we have known him."

every knowledge and art; he would surprise you by his playing, his painting, his writing, his criticism, his knowledge of philosophy, and above all, by a sort of vague, disconnected and totally inexplicable erudition. What was specially his, and genuine, was his faculty for turning over a subject in a conversation. There was an insane lucidity in his conclusions; a singular, humorous eloquence in his language, and a power of method, bringing the whole of life into the focus of the subject under hand; none of which I have ever heard equalled or even approached by any other talker. I am sure that he and I together have, in a brief, conspectory manner, turned over the stuff of a year's reading in one half-hour of talk. He was the most valuable man to talk to, above all in his younger days; for he twisted like a serpent, changed like the patterns in a kaleidoscope, transmigrated (it is the only word) from one point of view to another with a swiftness and completeness that left a stupid and merely logical mind panting in the rear; and so, in an incredibly brief space of time, helped you to view a question upon every side. In sheer trenchancy of mind, I have ever been his humble and distant follower. The multiplicity and swiftness of his apprehensions, if they do not bewilder, at least paralyse his mind. He is utterly without measure. He will spend a week in regulating the expenses of an imaginary navy; and then in ten minutes crush a subtle fallacy or create a new vein of criticism. We have perhaps only one moral quality in common: a desire to do justice to those with whom we are at enmity.

"The next friend who came to me (I take them in

the order of time) was, I think, Charles Baxter. I cannot characterise a personality so unusual in the little space that I can here afford. I have never known one of so mingled a strain. As a companion, when in spirits, he stands without an equal in my experience. He is the only man I ever heard of who could give and take in conversation with the wit and polish of style that we find in Congreve's comedies. He is likewise the only person I ever knew who could *advise*, or, to explain more perfectly my meaning, who could both make helpful suggestions and at the same time hold his tongue when he had none to offer.

"The next was James Walter Ferrier. It is only now when I come to describe them that I perceive how strange a crew were my associates; but Ferrier's strangeness was of a tragic character. The grandson of old Wilson, the son of Ferrier the metaphysician, he was gifted with very considerable abilities; he was by nature the most complete and gentle gentleman (I must risk the pleonasm) I have known.

["I never knew any man so superior to himself. The best of him only came as a vision, like Corsica from the Corniche. He never gave his measure either morally or intellectually. The curse was on him. Even his friends did not know him but by fits. I have passed hours with him when he was so wise, good, and sweet, that I never knew the like of it in any other.]

"The fourth of these friends was Sir Walter Simpson, son of Sir James who gave chloroform to the world. He was, I think, the eldest of my associates; yet he must have been of a more deliberate growth,

for when we encountered, I believe we were about equal in intellectual development. His was a slow fighting mind. You would see him, at times, wrestle for a minute at a time with a refractory jest, and perhaps fail to throw it at the end. I think his special character was a profound shyness, a shyness which was not so much exhibited in society as it ruled in his own dealings with himself. I have said his mind was slow, and in this he was an opposite and perhaps an antidote to Bob. I have known him battle a question sometimes with himself, sometimes with me, month after month for years; he had an honest stubbornness in thinking, and would neither let himself be beat nor cry victory.

"The mere return of Bob changed at once and for ever the course of my life; I can give you an idea of my relief only by saying that I was at last able to breathe. The miserable isolation in which I had languished was no more in season, and I began to be happy. To have no one to whom you can speak your thoughts is but a slight trial; for a month or two at a time, I can support it almost without regret; but to be young, to be daily making fresh discoveries and fabricating new theories of life, to be full of flimsy, whimsical, overpowering humours, that seem to leave you no alternative but to confide them or to die, and not only not to have, but never to have had a confidant, is an astounding misery. I now understand it best by recognising my delight when that period was ended. I thought I minded for nothing when I had found my Faithful; my heart was like a bird's; I

was done with the sullens for good; there was an end of green-sickness for my life as soon as I had got a friend to laugh with. Laughter was at that time our principal affair, and I doubt if we could have had a better. . . .

"As Bob said, we did nothing obvious; the least joke was spiced to us by being imbedded in mountains of monotony."

Here the manuscript breaks off. Some notes on an earlier page enable us to learn in what direction it might have been continued. "Whitman: humanity: L. J. R.: love of mankind: sense of inequality: justification of art: decline of religion: I take to the New Testament: change startling: growing desire for truth: Spencer: should have done better with the New Test."

Thus the coming of happiness was due partly to his friends and partly to his reading. To the list of the former there is still an addition to be made—the name of Fleeming Jenkin. It was in 1868 that Jenkin came to Edinburgh as Professor of Engineering, and it was first in the character of a truant that Stevenson came under his notice. The professor was fifteen years older than his pupil—a difference in age which is often difficult to surmount. But besides his boundless energy and vitality, there was about Jenkin a perpetual boyishness, which showed itself not least in this, that his development continued to the end of his life. His delight in all that was high-minded and heroic, his fiery enthusiasm, his extraordinary readiness and spirit, were just the qualities to win and to stimulate the younger man. Moreover,

at the time that Stevenson fell under his influence, the detachment and independence of Jenkin's religious views rendered that influence of far greater weight than if he had been content to yield a lifeless assent to established observances and conventional creeds. Stevenson was in revolt, or meditating an outbreak. Here was a man, ready to question everything, exercising a clear-sighted judgment, and yet full of earnestness and piety, who "saw life very simple," who did not love refinements, but was "a friend to much conformity in unessentials." And about Jenkin there were these further points which distinguished him from Stevenson's other friends, and gave him a great advantage. He was the only one who had already fought the battle of life, and not only was victorious but knew how to carry his success. Moreover, he was the first of Stevenson's friends who was already married. Perhaps the most charming passages in the *Memoir of Fleeming Jenkin* are those which suggest rather than describe the infinite tenderness and romance which marriage brought into his life and made his house all it was to those who frequented it. Mrs. Jenkin, writing in 1895, says that her husband loved Louis best of all his friends, and Stevenson, when he came to write Jenkin's biography, records what mingled pain and pleasure it was "to dig into the past of a dead friend, and find him, at every spadeful, shine brighter."

Of his first introduction to Mrs. Jenkin, she has herself given an account. Late on a winter afternoon in 1868 she paid her first visit to 17 Heriot Row, and there found Mrs. Stevenson sitting by the firelight,

apparently alone. They began to talk, when "suddenly, from out of a dark corner beyond the fireplace, came a voice, peculiar, vibrating; a boy's voice, I thought at first. 'Oh!' said Mrs. Stevenson, 'I forgot that my son was in the room. Let me introduce him to you.' The voice went on: I listened in perplexity and amazement. Who was this son who talked as Charles Lamb wrote? this young Heine with the Scottish accent? I stayed long, and when I came away the unseen converser came down with me to the front-door to let me out. As he opened it, the light of the gas-lamp outside ('For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door,' he sings) fell on him, and I saw a slender, brown, long-haired lad, with great dark eyes, a brilliant smile, and a gentle, deprecating bend of the head. 'A boy of sixteen,' I said to myself. But he was eighteen, looking then, as he always did, younger than his age. I asked him to come and see us. He said, 'Shall I come to-morrow?' I said 'Yes,' and ran home. As I sat down to dinner I announced, 'I have made the acquaintance of a poet!' He came on the morrow, and from that day forward we saw him constantly. From that day forward too, our affection and our admiration for him, and our delight in his company, grew."

Thus much of his friends and their influence. There was also the other continual and stimulating influence of books, and though Stevenson was never a scholar in the strict and more arid sense, few men ever brought so great an enthusiasm to the studies of their choice. His ardour was now at its height. Twenty years later he wrote: "I have really enjoyed

this book as I—almost as I—used to enjoy books when I was going twenty—twenty-three; and these are the years for reading.

"Books were the proper remedy: books of vivid human import, forcing upon the minds of young men the issues, pleasures, busyness, importance, and immediacy of that life in which they stand; books of smiling or heroic temper, to excite or to console; books of a large design, shadowing the complexity of that game of consequences to which we all sit down, the hanger-back not least."

Besides his books at home, he had always access to the Advocates' Library, the great public library of Edinburgh, which is entitled to receive a copy of everything published in the kingdom. But for the present the question is of those works with which a man lives, which for the time become an intimate part of himself, and closer than any friend. Such were to Stevenson the three already mentioned, the New Testament, Walt Whitman, and Herbert Spencer. Of the first he says but little, and of that I have already spoken: to Whitman he has done a measure of justice in one of the *Familiar Studies*, and also in a paper on "Books which have influenced me." In the latter, too, Mr. Herbert Spencer also receives his meed of gratitude, and to him succeed Shakespeare, Dumas, Bunyan, Montaigne, and many others in rapid sequence, until the writer was manifestly overwhelmed in returning thanks to the whole world of books which brought him so much wisdom and happiness.

But learning to write—there was the business of life. Although the description of the method by

which he taught himself this most difficult of arts has been quoted again and again, and has long ago become classical, I have no alternative and no desire but to give it in this place. The process described had long begun, when this period opened, as it continued after its close; but to these years it chiefly refers—a space of protracted and laborious application without encouragement or immediate reward.

"All through my boyhood and youth I was known and pointed out for the pattern of an idler; and yet I was always busy on my own private end, which was to learn to write. I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in. As I walked, my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words; when I sat by the roadside, I would either read, or a pencil and a penny version-book would be in my hand, to note down the features of the scene or commemorate some halting stanzas. Thus I lived with words.

"And what I thus wrote was for no ulterior use; it was written consciously for practice. It was not so much that I wished to be an author (though I wished that too) as that I had vowed that I would learn to write. That was a proficiency that tempted me; and I practised to acquire it, as men learn to whittle, in a wager with myself. Description was the principal field of my exercise; for to anyone with senses there is always something worth describing, and town and country are but one continuous subject. But I worked in other ways also; often accompanied my walks with dramatic dialogues, in which I played

many parts; and often exercised myself in writing down conversations from memory.

"Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicious force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful, and I knew it; and tried again, and was again unsuccessful, and always unsuccessful; but at least in these vain bouts I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction and the co-ordination of parts.

"I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire and to Obermann. I remember one of these monkey-tricks, which was called 'The Vanity of Morals'; it was to have had a second part 'The Vanity of Knowledge'; but the second part was never attempted, and the first part was written (which is my reason for recalling it, ghost-like, from its ashes) no less than three times: first in the manner of Hazlitt, second in the manner of Ruskin, who had cast on me a passing spell, and third, in a laborious pasticcio of Sir Thomas Browne. So with my other works: *Cain*, an epic, was (save the mark!) an imitation of Sordello: *Robin Hood*, a tale in verse, took an eclectic middle course among the fields of Keats, Chaucer, and Morris: in *Monmouth*, a tragedy, I reclined on the bosom of Mr. Swinburne; in my innumerable gouty-footed lyrics, I followed many masters; in the first draft of *The King's Pardon*, a tragedy, I was on

the trail of no less a man than John Webster; in the second draft of the same piece, with staggering versatility, I had shifted my allegiance to Congreve, and of course conceived my fable in a less serious vein—for it was not Congreve's verse, it was his exquisite prose, that I admired and sought to copy. . . .

"That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write; whether I have profited or not, that is the way. It was so Keats learned, and there was never a finer temperament for literature than Keats. . . .

"It is the great point of these imitations that there still shines, beyond the student's reach, his inimitable model. I must have had some disposition to learn; for I clear-sightedly condemned my own performances. I liked doing them indeed; but when they were done, I could see they were rubbish. In consequence, I very rarely showed them even to my friends; and such friends as I chose to be my confidants I must have chosen well, for they had the friendliness to be quite plain with me. 'Padding,' said one. Another wrote: 'I cannot understand why you do lyrics so badly.' No more could I! Thrice I put myself in the way of a more authoritative rebuff, by sending a paper to a magazine. These were returned, and I was not surprised or even pained. If they had not been looked at, as (like all amateurs) I suspected was the case, there was no good in repeating the experiment; if they had been looked at—well then I had not yet learned to write, and I must keep on learning and living."

Thus the secret of learning was—for the right man—only the secret of taking pains: and yet in the

history of his endeavours we find, where we should least expect it, a hereditary trait. It seems as absurd to couple with indolence the name of the indefatigable writer, as it was for him to bring his grandfather into a similar connection: but it is from himself that we hear of this failing, although we know not to which year it must be referred.

"I remember a time when I was very idle, and lived and profited by that humour. I have no idea why I ceased to be so, yet I scarce believe I have the power to return to it; it is a change of age. I made consciously a thousand little efforts, but the determination from which these arose came to me while I slept and in the way of growth. I have had a thousand skirmishes to keep myself at work upon particular mornings, and sometimes the affair was hot; but of that great change of campaign, which decided all this part of my life and turned me from one whose business was to shirk into one whose business was to strive and persevere, it seems to me as though all that had been done by some one else. The life of Goethe affected me; so did that of Balzac; and some very noble remarks by the latter in a pretty bad book, the *Cousine Bette*. I dare say I could trace some other influences in the change. All I mean is, I was never conscious of a struggle, nor registered a vow, nor seemingly had anything personally to do with the matter. I came about like a well-handled ship. There stood at the wheel that unknown steersman whom we call God."

As to the products of his labours, editors, as he has told us, would have nothing to say to them. So he

became an editor himself. Magazines had risen and fallen wherever the boy had gone; but none of his serials had yet attained the distinction of type. The idea of the *Edinburgh University Magazine* was started in the rooms of the "Spec." by four of the members of that society, of which Stevenson was the youngest and least esteemed; and the history of its rise and fall (for print did not save it from the fate of its manuscript predecessors) may be read in *Memories and Portraits.*

"The magazine appeared in a yellow cover, which was the best part of it, for at least it was unassuming; . . . it ran four months in undisturbed obscurity, and died without a gasp. The first number was edited by all four of us, with prodigious bustle; the second fell principally into the hands of Ferrier and me; the third I edited alone; and it has long been a solemn question who it was that edited the fourth. . . .

"It was no news to me, but only the wholesome confirmation of my judgment, when the magazine struggled into half-birth, and instantly sickened and subsided into night. . . . I cleared the decks after this lost engagement; had the necessary interview with my father, which passed off not amiss; paid over my share of expense; . . . and then, reviewing the whole episode, I told myself that the time was not yet ripe, nor the man ready; and to work again I went with my penny version-books, having fallen back in one day from the printed author to the manuscript student."

In 1871 he wrote the paper on "A New Form of Intermittent Light for Lighthouses," which was

highly praised, and received a £3 medal from the Royal Scottish Society of Arts, and in May 1873 his paper "On the Thermal Influence of Forests" was communicated to the Royal Society of Edinburgh by his father, and duly appeared in the *Proceedings* of that Society.

Meanwhile their author was reading for the Bar, or at any rate attending some of the necessary lectures in Civil Law, Public Law, and Political Economy. In the second of these subjects he was even third in the class and received honourable mention, and from Professor Hodgson he gained a certificate for essays.

During the years 1872 and 1873 he spent some months in the office of Messrs. Skene and Peacock, Writers to the Signet, in order to learn conveyancing. The senior partner of this firm was the well-known historian and antiquary, Mr. W. F. Skene, the author of *Celtic Scotland*, but it seems that he was hardly at all brought into connection with his pupil, and that, in later years, either learned with much regret what they might have found in one another's society.

In November 1872 Stevenson, having no degree or qualification for exemption, passed the preliminary examination for the Scottish Bar; the circumstances are worth mention only for the light they throw on his character and his education. French was one of the subjects offered, and only the day before the examination he discovered that questions would be set him in the grammar of that language. He forthwith procured a book and realised that here was a body of knowledge, the very existence of which had been unknown to him. It was manifestly useless to

attempt to get it up in four-and-twenty hours, so he went in, relying on his practical acquaintance with the idiom. His ignorance was exposed, but his knowledge and his plausibility induced and enabled the examiner "to find a form of words," and his French was accepted as adequate. Another subject was Ethical and Metaphysical Philosophy, and Hamilton or Mackintosh (it is undesirable to be too precise) was the book prescribed. I give Stevenson's own account of what took place, as I have heard him tell the story. "The examiner asked me a question, and I had to say to him, 'I beg your pardon, but I do not understand your phraseology.' 'It's the text-book,' he said. 'Yes; but you couldn't possibly expect me to read so poor a book as that.' He laughed like a hunchback, and then put the question in another form; I had been reading Maine, and answered him by the historical method. They were probably the most curious answers ever given in the subject; I don't know what he thought of them, but they got me through."

In 1872 he proposed to take a summer session at some German university with Sir Walter Simpson, who was also studying Law. But his mother grew so nervous that he gave up the scheme, and in place of it the friends spent two or three weeks together during the first part of August, chiefly in lodgings in Frankfurt. His parents joined him at Baden-Baden, and he then went for a short walking tour in the Black Forest.

But Stevenson as he was in the later years of this period may best be seen in the curiously diverse en-

tries of a short diary kept on a folio sheet of paper upon his first entrance to the lawyers' office.

"*Thursday, May 9th* (1872).—Went to office for first time. Had to pass an old sailor and an idiot boy, who tried both to join company with me, lest I should be late for office. A fine sunny, breezy morning, walking in. A small boy (about ten) calling out 'Flory' to a dog was very pretty. There was a quaint little *tremolo* in his voice that gave it a *longing*, that was both laughable and touching. All the rest of the way in, his voice rang in my memory and made me very happy.

"*Sunday, May 12th.*—My father and I walked over to Glencorse to church. A fat, ruddy farm wench showed us the way; for the church, although on the top of a hill, is so buried among the tree-tops that one does not see it till one trips against the plate. It is a quaint old building, and the minister, Mr. Torrance (his father and grandfather were here before him), is still more quaint and striking. He is about eighty; and he lamed himself last summer dancing a reel at a wedding. He wears black thread gloves; and the whole manner of the man in the pulpit breathes of last century.

"*Monday, May 13th.*—In all day at the office. In the evening dined with Bob. Met X——, who was quite drunk and spent nigh an hour in describing his wife's last hours—an infliction which he hired us to support with sherry *ad lib.* Splendid moonlight night. Bob walked out to Fairmilehead with me. We were in a state of mind that only comes too seldom in a lifetime. We danced and sang the whole

way up the long hill, without sensible fatigue. I think there was no actual conversation—at least none has remained in my memory; I recollect nothing but 'profuse bursts of unpremeditated song.' Such a night was worth gold untold. *Ave pia testa!*

"*Friday, July 5th.*—A very hot sunny day. The Princes Street Gardens were full of girls and idle men, steeping themselves in sunshine. A boy lay on the grass under a clump of gigantic hemlocks in flower, that looked quite tropical and gave the whole garden a southern smack that was intensely charming in my eyes. He was more ragged than one could conceive possible. It occurred to me that I might here play *le dieu des pauvres gens*, and repeat for him that pleasure that I so often try to acquire artificially for myself by hiding money in odd corners and hopelessly trying to forget where I have laid it; so I slipped a halfpenny into his ragged waistcoat pocket. One might write whole essays about his delight at finding it."

CHAPTER VI

LIFE AT FIVE-AND-TWENTY—1873-76

"Since I am sworn to live my life
And not to keep an easy heart,
Some men may sit and drink apart,
I bear a banner in the strife.

Some can take quiet thought to wife,
I am all day at *tierce* and *carte*,
Since I am sworn to live my life
And not to keep an easy heart.

I follow gaily to the fife,
Leave Wisdom bowed above a chart,
And Prudence brawling in the mart,
And dare Misfortune to the knife,
Since I am sworn to live my life."

R. L. S.

"I clung hard to that entrancing age, but with the best will, no man can be twenty-five for ever."

Preface to *Virginibus Puerisque*.

EIGHTEEN hundred and seventy-three was a decisive year: for although it left Stevenson, as it found him, a law student with literary tastes, it yet marked a definite change in his life. It saw the religious question come to a crisis, and by so much, therefore, nearer to a settlement; it brought him new friends with both interest and influence in the career for which he was longing; and it foreshadowed the beginning of that career in the ac-

ceptance and publication of the first of his magazine articles.

The most important event of the year for him sounds in itself one of the most trivial that can well be imagined—a visit to a country parsonage in Suffolk. A granddaughter of the old minister of Colinton had several years before married the Rev. Churchill Babington, Disney Professor of Archæology in the University of Cambridge, and formerly a Fellow of St. John's College, who had taken the college living of Cockfield, a few miles from Bury St. Edmunds. Here Stevenson had paid a visit in 1870, one of those excursions into England of which he speaks in the essay on "The Foreigner at Home," and from which he received "so vivid an impression of foreign travel and strange lands and manners." These sensations were now renewed and deepened, but the later visit was to have other and more lasting effects: Stevenson now met for the first time two fellow-guests, whose friendship became at once an important element in his life, affecting his development, changing his horizon, and opening for him a direct outlook into the world of letters in which he was to be hereafter so brilliant a figure. The first of these, a connection by marriage and intimate friend of his hostess, was the Mrs. Sitwell[1] to whom those letters were addressed, which throw so much light on the inner feelings and thoughts of the ensuing period of Stevenson's life. The second was Sir Sidney Colvin, who then and there began that friendship which was so immediately helpful, which survived all shocks of

[1] Since Lady Colvin.

time and change, which separation by half the world seemed only to render more close and assiduous, and which has its monument in the *Vailima Letters*, in the volumes of Stevenson's correspondence, and in the Edinburgh Edition of his works. Mr. Colvin was then still resident at Cambridge as a Fellow of Trinity College, and had that same year been elected Slade Professor of Fine Art in the University. Although Stevenson's elder by only a few years, he had already established for himself a reputation as a critic in literature and art, was favourably regarded by editors, and was fast becoming a personage of influence and authority.

It might seem that the list of Stevenson's friends already included as many as one man could retain in intimate relation; but for these two, and others yet to come, there was ample room. Only six months before, in one of the morbid moods he was gradually putting behind him, as he sloughed the unhappiness of his youth, he had written down the chief desires of his heart. "First, good health; secondly, a small competence; and thirdly, O Du Lieber Gott! friends." Seldom was any prayer more fully answered than this last petition. Had he but known, the means of gaining it were already within his hands in a measure rarely granted to any man. At this very time, Colvin tells us, "his social charm was already at its height. He was passing through a period of neatness between two of Bohemian carelessness as to dress, and so its effect was immediate." But indeed at any time he "had only to speak in order to be recognised in the first minute for a witty

and charming gentleman, and within the first five for a master spirit and man of genius."

At all events, by his hosts and by his fellow-guests his attraction was quickly felt, and the month of August, which passed away with no other episodes than a croquet party or a school feast, was nevertheless a landmark in his career.

From Suffolk he returned to Swanston with increased confidence and raised hopes, and at once plunged into work. The essay on "Roads" was completed and sent to the *Saturday Review*, and he began a paper on "Walt Whitman."

But the preceding winter had tried him in mind and body, and he was now further weakened by a severe attack of diphtheria. In February his father had come across a draft of the constitution of the L. J. R. (p. 79), and had taken the society as seriously as the youngest of its members could have wished. The acute misunderstanding was limited to part of this year, and then by degrees it passed away. When Mr. Stevenson had determined beforehand on any course of action, he would throw himself into the part he had proposed with an energy and emphasis which were often, unconsciously to himself, far in excess of the situation or of the words he had intended to employ. "I have the family failing of taking strong views," he had written to his future wife in 1848, "and of expressing those views strongly." A scene with him was no figure of words: he suffered the extreme of the emotions he depicted; and the knowledge and fear of this result made any difference between them very painful to his son. The differences

arose, or threatened to arise again, the winter was coming on, and Louis' work came to an end.

An idea had arisen that he might be called not to the Scottish, but to the English Bar; and as his hopes were now directed towards London, the scheme was very welcome. To London accordingly he went in the last week of October with a view of entering one of the Inns of Court and passing the preliminary examination, if he could convince the examiners. The scheme was quickly laid aside. His friends in town found him so unwell that they at once insisted on his seeing Dr. (afterwards Sir Andrew) Clark. The diagnosis was plain—nervous exhaustion with a threatening of phthisis; the prescription was chiefly mental—a winter in the Riviera by himself, and in complete freedom from anxiety or worry. His mother came and saw him off, and on the 5th of November he started for Mentone, three weeks before his article on "Roads" had appeared in the *Portfolio*, of which P. G. Hamerton was editor.

How he sat in the sun and read George Sand his letters tell us; and all that he thought and felt and saw during the first six weeks was written down next spring in *Ordered South:* a paper "not particularly well written," he thought, but "scrupulously correct." In the meantime, in "numbness of spirit" he rested and recovered strength. It was one of the halting places of life, and there he sat by the wayside to recruit and prepare for a fresh advance. Mrs. Sitwell's letters brightened his solitude, as they had already cheered and helped him in Edinburgh. His answers to her show better than any analysis or

description the solace and the strength which came to him from her hands.

In his hotel at Mentone Stevenson made the acquaintance of two or three congenial people, who lent him Clough and other books which he read with interest; but as yet he was too weak for any serious reading, and was hardly fit for the exertion of talking to strangers.

By the middle of December one stage of his convalescence was already made. He was now to experience another advantage of his newly formed friendships, as Sidney Colvin joined him at Mentone and supplied the intimate conversation and discussion which had become his chief need. There was no great change in his life; they passed the time quietly enough, together or apart, as the fancy took them; reading *Woodstock* aloud, or plunged in talk on any or all subjects; sitting in the olive yards or in a boat, basking in the sun; or in "some nook upon St. Martin's Cape, haunted by the voice of breakers, and fragrant with the threefold sweetness of the rosemary and the sea pines and the sea."

For a few days they went to Monte Carlo, where they "produced the effect of something unnatural upon the people," because where everybody gambled all night, they spent their evenings at home; but they soon returned to Mentone, and there in the hotel to which the chance of accommodation brought them, were fortunate in finding a small but very cosmopolitan society, which greatly brightened Stevenson's stay, when his companion had to leave him. The chief members of this little coterie were a Georgian

lady and her sister with two little daughters; M. Robinet, a French painter; and an American and his wife and child, "one of the best story-tellers in the world, a man who can make a whole table-d'hôte listen to him for ten minutes while he tells how he lost his dog and found him again." With the younger of the Russian children, Nelitschka, "a little polyglot button" of only two and a half, who spoke six languages, or fragments of them, Stevenson at once struck up a great friendship, and his letters for the next three months are full of her, and her sayings and doings.

She was almost, if not quite, the only very young child who ever came much under his notice after the days of his own boyhood, and she seems to have been so extraordinarily brilliant and fascinating a little creature that there is nothing to wonder at in the great attraction which she had for him. The ladies, moreover, were women of cultivation and refinement; full of spirits, and always devising fresh amusements: telling fortunes, writing characters, dancing Russian dances and singing Russian airs, and charmed, to Stevenson's intense delight, by what he afterwards loved to call, with James Mohr, "the melancholy tunes of my native mountains." It was one of the episodes of real life; an introduction of characters, who never reappear in the story, an episode such as literature rejects; but it made Stevenson's path smoother at a time when he was unable to climb steep places, and it took his thoughts off himself and hastened his recovery, while he was still unfit for prolonged exertion or any serious study.

Their circle was afterwards increased by the arrival of another friend of the Russians, the prince whose clever and voluble talk he has described in one of his letters, by whom he was nearly persuaded to take a course of Law, during the summer, at the University of Göttingen. At this time and place also began Stevenson's friendship with Mr. Andrew Lang, who was then staying in the Riviera and one day called upon Sir Sidney Colvin. The impression Stevenson produced was, Mr. Lang confesses, "not wholly favourable":—

"A man of twenty-two, his smooth face, the more girlish by reason of his long hair, was hectic. Clad in a wide blue cloak, he looked nothing less than English, except Scotch." In spite of so tepid a beginning the acquaintance prospered, and grew into a friendship which endured until the end.

When Sidney Colvin, after one brief absence, finally returned to England, his companion was already working again, though still far from strong. Even by the middle of March, he says that he is "idle; but a man of eighty can't be too active, and that is my age."

In April he described the course of his gradual recovery to his mother. "I just noticed last night a curious example of how I have changed since I have been a little better: I burn two candles every night now; for long, I never lit but one, and when my eyes were too weary to read any more, I put even that out and sat in the dark. Any prospect of recovery changed all that."

In the beginning of April he reached Paris, and there found his cousin R. A. M. Stevenson, who had

now taken up painting as a profession, and had been studying during the winter at Antwerp. This was Louis' first independent acquaintance with Paris, and he delayed his return to Edinburgh till the end of the month, when the weather in the North might be more favourable. But this was only a measure of caution, and for several years to come we hear no more of his health as affecting his movements, or seriously hindering his work.

On his return home he found that many of his troubles had vanished. He had not of course solved the riddle of the universe, nor adjusted all contending duties, nor mastered all his impulses and appetites. He had not learned to handle his pen with entire precision, or to say exactly the thing he wished in the manner perfectly befitting it; nor was his way of life open before him. But his relations with his parents were on the old footing once more, and in the religious question a *modus vivendi* seems to have been established with his father.

The question of his allowance was now reconsidered. The man who had been trusted freely with all the money necessary for his expensive sojourn abroad, could not be put back to his small pocket-money, and it was settled that in future he was to receive seven pounds a month, more even than he himself had thought of suggesting.

Money at his command and friends in the South forthwith changed his mode of life. For the whole seven years of the preceding period he had only crossed the Border thrice, but henceforth he was never continuously at home for more than three

months at a time. Three springs and two autumns he spent in Edinburgh or at Swanston, but in the intervals his face became familiar in London, Paris, and the resorts of painters near Fontainebleau. But all the time he never went far afield, and between 1874 and 1879 seems not to have travelled further than three hundred miles from the English coast.

In Edinburgh his attention still had for some little time to be given to the study and pursuit of the law. In the winter session of 1874 he resumed his attendance at the lectures of the University professors on Conveyancing, Scots Law, and Constitutional Law and History. On July 14, 1875, he successfully passed his Final Examination, and two days after was called to the Scottish Bar. On the 25th he had his first, complimentary brief, and the following day he sailed for London on his way to France. "Accept my hearty congratulations on being done with it," Jenkin wrote. "I believe that is the view you like to take of the beginning you must have made." Stevenson returned, however, in the end of September, and during the next few months made some sort of effort to practise, although he does not seem to have impressed anybody outside his own family, as being a serious lawyer. He frequented the great hall of the Parliament House, which, like Westminster in old days, is the centre of the courts, and the haunt of advocates waiting for business. The brass plate with his name, usual in Scotland, was affixed to the door of 17 Heriot Row, and he had the fourth or fifth share in the services of a clerk, whom it is alleged that he did not know by sight. He had in all four briefs,

and the total of his fees never reached double figures. One piece of business might, he told me, have assumed real importance, but a compromise brought it to an end. "If it had prospered," he said, "I might have stuck to the Bar, and then I suppose I should have been dead of the climate long ago."

The Advocates' Library in the Parliament House is the best in Scotland; and here Stevenson hoped to get some of his literary work done, while he was waiting for briefs. But the division of interests and the attractive company of his fellows were too unsettling; he soon returned to his own upper room in his father's house, and came no more to the *Salle des Pas Perdus*.

But although, after he abandoned Parliament House, he was no longer confined to the city of his birth, it was still his home and the point of return from his wanderings in England or abroad. Three of the first four friends named in the preceding chapter were, like himself, now released from the necessity of living constantly in Edinburgh, yet their connection with it was maintained; and they continued more or less frequently to visit it; while Professor Jenkin and Charles Baxter remained resident there as before.

Nor did Stevenson's manner of life, at the times when he was in Edinburgh, suffer any sudden change. We must think of him in Scotland at this time as living chiefly in the society of a few intimates, still wandering about the city and its neighbourhood, "scraping acquaintance with all classes of man and woman-kind," travelling deliberately through his ages

and getting the heart out of his own liberal education, still to some extent in bonds to himself, though he had escaped in a degree from circumstance. No longer as a supplement to professional studies, but now as his avowed business, he wrote and rewrote, he blotted and recast his essays, tales, verses and plays as before, and accomplished much solid work. From general society he still held aloof, and it was in 1875 that he last took part in the Jenkins' theatricals, acting the Duke in *Twelfth Night*.

"He played no character on the stage as he could play himself among his friends" was his verdict upon Jenkin, and it was even more applicable to himself where his own friends were concerned; but as yet he could not modify his attitude towards the burgess of the Philistine, or forgo the intolerance of youth.

All this did not heighten his popularity or the estimation in which he was held, nor was he generally looked upon at this time as likely ever to bring honour to his native city. Mostly people perceived little more than the exterior of the lad, with his dilapidated clothes, his long hair, and distaste for office life. The companions who knew him best did not spare their criticism or laughter, and it was at this time that names like Flibbertigibbet and Mr. Fastidious Brisk were aimed at his volubility and exaggeration on the one hand, and a supposed tendency to sprightliness and affectation of phrase upon the other.

It was chiefly the older men who looked with a kindly glance upon the manifestations of his youth, such as old Mr. Baxter, who had for him as warm an appreciation as his son Charles had found in turn at

the hands of Thomas Stevenson; J. T. Mowbray, the family lawyer, a grim, dry, warm-hearted old bachelor, whom I have always fancied to be the original of Mr. Utterson in *Jekyll and Hyde*; Robert Hunter, of whom Stevenson has left a speaking portrait in the second part of *Talk and Talkers*; and other friendly veterans. These seem best to have realised the good that was in him, and indeed the husk is hardly noticeable to those who can read (as his contemporaries could not) how the frail lad found a lost child of three crying in the street in the middle of the night, and carried him half over Edinburgh, wrapped in his own greatcoat, while he sought in vain for the missing parents.

And still, as in his childhood and as in most of his books, happiness came to him chiefly in the country. Long walks in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh; summer evenings in the garden at Swanston, or on Caerketton or Allermuir; days passed in canoeing on the Forth at Queensferry, or skating upon Duddingston Loch—these were the chief part of his outdoor life, and the last of his time that was spent amid the scenery of his boyish days.

In August, 1874, he was yachting for a month with Sir Walter Simpson and Mr. T. Barclay on the West coast of Scotland. "Some of the brightest moments of my life were passed over tinned mulligatawny in the cabin of a sixteen-ton schooner storm-stayed in Portree Bay." The *Heron*, a fore and aft schooner, had two Devon men as crew, and their labours were supplemented by the help of the owners and their friends. "My health is a miracle. I expose myself

to rain, and walk, and row, and over-eat myself. I eat, I drink, I bathe in the briny, I sleep." His return to Swanston was characteristically announced: "I left my pipe on board the yacht, my umbrella in the dog-cart, and my portmanteau by the way," and he reached home without his luggage, in a hat borrowed from one of his friends and a coat belonging to another.

In the following winter there came to him a new friendship. "Yesterday, Leslie Stephen, who was down here to lecture, called on me and took me up to see a poor fellow, a poet who writes for him and who has been eighteen months in our infirmary, and may be, for all I know, eighteen months more. It was very sad to see him there in a little room with two beds, and a couple of sick children in the other bed; a girl came in to visit the children, and played dominoes on the counterpane with them; the gas flared and crackled, the fire burned in a dull, economical way; Stephen and I sat on a couple of chairs, and the poor fellow sat up in his bed with his hair and beard all tangled, and talked as cheerfully as if he had been in a king's palace, or the great King's palace of the blue air."

Here was no ordinary patient: the poet was W. E. Henley, who had come to Edinburgh to be under the care of Lister. The cheerful talk was but the first of many; if we may treat Stevenson's essays as autobiographical, for a part of his youth he was wont to "avoid the hospital doors, the pale faces, the sweet whiff of chloroform," but that time was now past. Here was a man of kindred spirit to himself, in need

of the companionship that none could better give, and from that time forth Stevenson was his friend, and placed himself, and all that he had, at his disposal. He soon returned, bringing books, piles of Balzac, "big yellow books, quite impudently French," and with the books he brought Charles Baxter and others of his friends.

In these years he first discovered that taste for classical music which was afterwards fostered by successive friends. The revelation dated from a concert in Edinburgh for which some one had given him a ticket, and to which he went with reluctance. It was a Beethoven quartet, I think, that then burst upon him for the first time, and on that day he permanently added another to the many pleasures he so keenly enjoyed.

To London in these years he paid frequent visits, and several times stayed with Sidney Colvin at Cambridge, besides spending a week or two with him at Hampstead in June, 1874. This last occasion, however, and a return to the same place in the autum of that year were practically indistinguishable from his life in London. On June 3d, 1874, after only six weeks' delay, he was elected a member of the Savile Club, which had been founded five years before, and was still in its original house, 15, Savile Row. This was for the next five years the centre of his London life, and though it would probably be a mistake to speak as if it were at once to him all that it afterwards became, yet, since he was of all men the most clubbable, from the beginning it gave him ample opportunities of acquaintance with men of various tastes.

many of them of great ability, even if they had not yet achieved or were not achieving a reputation. Some of the members he already knew. Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Andrew Lang he had previously met in the Riviera; Professor Masson was an Edinburgh friend of the family; to Dr. Appleton, editor of the *Academy*, and Mr. Walter Pollock, editor of the *Saturday Review*, he was soon introduced; but it would be long to enumerate the friends, and idle to recapitulate the acquaintances, that Stevenson soon made within those walls.

Into formal society nothing would ever have induced him to go in London any more than in Edinburgh; he invariably refused the opportunities which presented themselves to him. In 1874, when he came to London for the first time under new auspices, he seems to have met Miss Thackeray, Mrs. Lynn Linton, and a few other well-known people, chiefly at the house of Sir Leslie Stephen, to whom he had been introduced by Sidney Colvin. His great and natural desire to see Carlyle was frustrated, for Stephen, on whose kind offices he depended, found the sage in one of his darker moods and at a moment of irritation. He had just been suffering at the hands of an interviewer for whom he fancied Stephen was responsible, and when Stevenson was mentioned as a young Scot who was most anxious to meet him, and who had taken to the study of Knox, the senior would only say that he did not see why anybody should want either to see his "wretched old carcase" or to say anything more about Knox, and that the young man had better apply when he had put his studies into

an articulate shape. So Stevenson never met his fellow-countryman.

Besides the visits to London and Cambridge there were many journeys and excursions; and the importance of such travel to him in these days may be estimated by the degree in which it formed the topic of his early writings. Between 1871 and 1876 no less than nine of his papers deal with travel or the external appearance of places known to him; and it is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that his first three books were the *Inland Voyage*, the *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh*, and the *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*.

In 1875 came the walk up the valley of the Loing with Sir Walter Simpson, in which Stevenson's costume led to the incarceration described in *An Epilogue to An Inland Voyage*, and this trip being cut short, he joined his parents, as he had intended, at Wiesbaden, and went with them to Homburg and Mainz.

In 1876 he spent the second week in January walking in Carrick and Galloway, when he slept a night at Ballantrae, and later in the year, after a visit in August to the Jenkins, near Loch Carron, he joined Sir Walter Simpson again and took the canoe journey of the *Inland Voyage* from Antwerp to Brussels, and then from the French frontier by the Oise almost to the Seine.

These journeys and the general change in Stevenson's life were rendered possible, as I have said, by the liberality of his father (some ten years later he wrote, "I fall always on my feet; but I am con-

strained to add that the best part of my legs seems to be my father"), yet it must not be supposed that Stevenson even now was often in funds. He was open-handed to a fault; and he had many wants of his own which often went unsatisfied. It is to this period that a story belongs which he was fond of telling against himself. He was staying in London, and had protracted his visit to the extreme limit of his resources. On his way back to the North he arrived at the station with a sum barely sufficient for the cheapest ticket, available only by a night journey, and a newly bought copy of Mr. Swinburne's *Queen Mother and Rosamond*. On learning his deficiency, he tried his best powers of persuasion on the booking-clerk, but in vain: the man, in his blindness, refused to accept the book as any part of the payment, and, if I remember right, Stevenson passed the day in the station without food, and reached home next morning in a famished condition.

Thus, as we have seen, with the exception of his release from law, and the friendship with W. E. Henley, conditions in Edinburgh remained much the same; the Savile and the people he met there were, together with Sidney Colvin's advice and help, the principal feature of his life in England; it is to France that we must turn for the other influences chiefly affecting him, and for the circumstances of most importance in determining his development at this period. In the winter of 1873–74 he had, as we have seen, renewed acquaintance with the Riviera, which in later days was to become yet more familiar. For the present he returned to that neighbourhood

no more, but there was no year from 1874 to 1879 in which he did not pay one or more visits of several weeks' duration to another part of France. Except for the time that he was in the Cevennes and on his cruise down the Oise, he stayed mostly in the outskirts of the forest of Fontainebleau, in the valley of the Loing, or in Paris itself. Sometimes, as at Monastier, he was alone; sometimes, as at Nemours or at Cernay la Ville, he was with his cousin Bob or Sir Walter Simpson; but for the most part he lived in familiar intercourse with the artists who frequented his favourite resorts. French was the only foreign tongue he ever mastered, and in that he acquired real proficiency. His knowledge of the language and literature was considerable, and its influence on his work was entirely for good, as it increased the delicacy and clearness of his style, and yet left his originality unimpaired.

When his friends were painting, he often betook himself to lonely walks and meditations among the rocks and woods, but company and conversation counted for a great deal. "I knew three young men who walked together daily for some two moths in a solemn and beautiful forest and in cloudless summer weather; daily they talked with unabated zest, and yet scarce wandered that whole time beyond two subjects—theology and love."

His earliest and perhaps his most frequent haunt was Barbizon. It had been the home of Millet, and its fields were the scene of the Angelus. In the village there existed an inn which was reserved for the artists, a strange society compounded of all national-

ities, in which French, English, and Americans predominated. Stevenson himself has described it in an essay.

"I was for some time a consistent Barbizonian; *et ego in Arcadia vixi*; it was a pleasant season; and that noiseless hamlet lying close among the borders of the wood is for me, as for so many others, a green spot in memory. The great Millet was just dead; the green shutters of his modest house were closed; his daughters were in mourning. The date of my first visit was thus an epoch in the history of art.

"Siron's inn, that excellent artists' barrack, was managed upon easy principles. At any hour of the night, when you returned from wandering in the forest, you went to the billiard-room and helped yourself to liquors, or descended to the cellar and returned laden with beer or wine. The Sirons were all locked in slumber; there was none to check your inroads; only at the week's end a computation was made, the gross sum was divided, and a varying share set down to every lodger's name under the rubric, *estrats*. At any hour of the morning, again, you could get your coffee or cold milk and set forth into the forest. The doves had perhaps wakened you, fluttering into your chamber; and on the threshold of the inn you were met by the aroma of the forest. Close by were the great aisles, the mossy boulders, the interminable field of forest shadow. There you were free to dream and wander. And at noon, and again at six o'clock, a good meal awaited you on Siron's table. The whole of your accommodation, set aside that varying item of the *estrats*, cost you five francs a day; your bill

was never offered you until you asked for it; and if you were out of luck's way, you might depart for where you pleased and leave it pending.

"Theoretically, the house was open to all comers; practically, it was a kind of club. The guests protected themselves, and, in so doing, they protected Siron. Formal manners being laid aside, essential courtesy was the more rigidly exacted; the new arrival had to feel the pulse of the society; and a breach of its undefined observances was promptly punished. A man might be as plain, as dull, as slovenly, as free of speech as he desired; but to a touch of presumption or a word of hectoring these free Barbizonians were as sensitive as a tea-party of maiden ladies. I have seen people driven forth from Barbizon; it would be difficult to say in words what they had done, but they deserved their fate. They had shown themselves unworthy to enjoy these corporate freedoms; they had pushed themselves; they had 'made their head'; they wanted tact to appreciate the 'fine shades' of Barbizonian etiquette. And, once they were condemned, the process of extrusion was ruthless in its cruelty; after one evening with the formidable Bodmer, the Bailly of our commonwealth, the erring stranger was beheld no more; he rose exceeding early the next day, and the first coach conveyed him from the scene of his discomfiture. These sentences of banishment were never, in my knowledge, delivered against an artist; such would, I believe, have been illegal; but the odd and pleasant fact is this, that they were never needed. Painters, sculptors, writers, singers, I have seen all of these in Barbizon, and

some were sulky, and some were blatant and inane; but one and all entered into the spirit of the association. . . .

"Our society, thus purged and guarded, was full of high spirits, of laughter, and of the initiative of youth. The few elder men who joined us were still young at heart, and took the key from their companions. We returned from long stations in the fortifying air, our blood renewed by the sunshine, our spirits refreshed by the silence of the forest; the Babel of loud voices sounded good; we fell to eat and play like the natural man; and in the high inn chamber, panelled with indifferent pictures, and lit by candles guttering in the night air, the talk and laughter sounded far into the night. It was a good place and a good life for any naturally minded youth; better yet for the student of painting, and perhaps best of all for the student of letters. He enjoyed a strenuous idleness full of visions, hearty meals, long, sweltering walks, mirth among companions; and, still floating like music through his brain, foresights of great works that Shakespeare might be proud to have conceived, headless epics, glorious torsos of dramas, and words that were alive with import. . . . We were all artists; almost all in the age of illusion, cultivating an imaginary genius, and walking to the strains of some deceiving Ariel; small wonder, indeed, if we were happy!"

Barbizon, however, was by no means the only resort of painters in this neighbourhood, nor the only one which Stevenson frequented: in the same paper he enumerates its rivals from his full knowledge.

Marlotte, Montigny, and Chailly-en-Bière he knew; Cernay la Ville was a favourite of his cousin Bob; but it was Grez which, in spite of an unpromising introduction, was his favourite quarters, and has the most important place in his history.

"*Barbizon* [*Summer* '75].

"My Dear Mother,—I have been three days at a place called Grez, a pretty and very melancholy village on the plain. A low bridge, with many arches choked with sedge; green fields of white and yellow water-lilies; poplars and willows innumerable; and about it all such an atmosphere of sadness and slackness, one could do nothing but get into the boat and out of it again, and yawn for bedtime. . . . I was very glad to be back again in this dear place, and smell the wet forest in the morning."

But later he wrote how delightful it was "to wake in Grez, to go down the green inn-garden, to find the river streaming through the bridge, and to see the dawn begin across the poplared level. The meals are laid in the cool arbour, under fluttering leaves. The splash of oars and bathers, the bathing costumes out to dry, the trim canoes beside the jetty, tell of a society that has an eye to pleasure. There is 'something to do' at Grez. Perhaps, for that very reason, I can recall no such enduring ardours, no such glories of exhilaration, as among the solemn groves and uneventful hours of Barbizon. But Grez is a merry place after its kind; pretty to see, merry to inhabit. The course of its pellucid river, whether up or down, is full of attractions for the navigator; the mirrored

and inverted images of trees; lilies, and mills, and the foam and thunder of weirs. And of all noble sweeps of roadway, none is nobler, on a windy dusk, than the highroad to Nemours between its lines of talking poplar."

If the country had the more influence in the end, Paris provided more variety and more diversion. There Stevenson stayed, in all manner of lodgings, varying from Meurice's Hotel (which was little to his liking) to students' accommodation in the Quartier Latin, and scattered throughout a region extending from Montmartre on the north to Mont Parnasse on the south.

At one time he writes: "I am in a new quarter, and *flâne* about in a leisurely way. I dine every day in a *crêmerie* with a party of Americans, an Irishman, and sometimes an English lady." Again: "I am living along with some fellows, and we partly make our own food, and have great fun marketing." Another time: "I have been engaged in a wild hunt for books—all forenoon, all afternoon, with occasional returns to Rue Racine with an armful. I have spent nearly all my money; and if I have luck in to-day's hunt, I believe I shall lay my head on the pillow to-night a beggar. But I have had goodish luck, and a heap of nice books. Please advance me £10 of my allowance. . . . Heaps of articles growing before me. Hurray." An attempt to work in some of the public libraries of Paris failed: the face of officialism was too daunting. "They are worse than banks—if that be possible. . . . In public offices of all kinds I feel like Esther before Ahasuerus."

This was the period when his letters were least frequent and least satisfactory, but of his sojourns in Paris no other memorial survives except Mr. Will. H. Low's *Chronicle of Friendships* and the first chapters of *The Wrecker*, which partly in detail and wholly in spirit are drawn from Stevenson's recollections of these years. In addition I have collected a few fragments of letters and papers, which may help to eke out the scanty material for a picture of that time.

"*11th October, Paris.*—Here I am so far on my way home. . . . Yesterday I had a splendid day. Luxembourg in the morning. Breakfast. Bob, Gaudez the sculptor, Low and I: hours of very good talk in the French idiom. All afternoon in the Louvre, till they turned us out unwilling. At night, the Français, *Rome Vaincue*, an impossible play, with Sarah Bernhardt as the blind grandmother, most sublime to behold. At breakfast we had lobster mayonnaise, kidneys, brochet, and tomates farcies, with lots of Carton. Dinner was a mere hurried sustentation of the immortal spirit before exposing it to another excitement. A splendid day, but two running would not do."

The theatre was a great delight to him. Although he had read (and written) plays from his early years, had revelled in the melodramas of the toy-theatre, and had acted with the Jenkins and in other private theatricals, I find no reference to his having visited a theatre before December, 1874, when he found Irving's Hamlet "interesting (for it is really studied) but not good"; and there is no sign of his having been really impressed until he saw Salvini as Mac-

beth at Edinburgh in the spring of 1876. Of this performance he wrote a criticism for the *Academy*, which he afterwards condemned as dealing with a subject that was still beyond the resources of his art. He himself, I am told, was never a tolerable actor, and certainly was never allotted a part of any importance. But his enthusiasm for the drama was great, and during these years was heightened and instructed by the two chief friends who shared his taste—Fleeming Jenkin and W. E. Henley.

One of his visits to the theatre led to a very characteristic scene, described long afterwards in a letter to Mr. Archer. The play had been the *Demi-Monde* of Dumas *fils*, in the last act of which Olivier de Jalin employs an unworthy stratagem against the woman who had been his mistress.

"I came forth from that performance in a breathing heat of indignation. . . . On my way down the Français stairs, I trod on an old gentleman's toes, whereupon, with that suavity which so well becomes me, I turned about to apologise, and on the instant, repenting me of that intention, stopped the apology midway, and added something in French to this effect: 'No, you are one of the *lâches* who have been applauding that piece. I retract my apology.' Said the old Frenchman, laying his hand on my arm, and with a smile that was truly heavenly in temperance, irony, good-nature, and knowledge of the world, 'Ah, monsieur, vous êtes bien jeune.'"

To this time also belongs the story reported by Mr. Andrew Lang. Stevenson, one day at a café, hearing a Frenchman say that the English were cowards,

promptly hit him across the face. "Monsieur, vous m'avez frappé!" said the Gaul. "A ce qu'il paraît," said the Scot, and there the incident ended. It is an instance the more of his fearlessness; for, although he would never have hesitated, he was quite incompetent to fight a duel with either pistol or sword.

The effect produced upon outsiders must sometimes have been rather bewildering. He used to tell how one day he and his cousin Bob, happening to be rather more in funds than usual, went to dine in one of the cafés of the Palais Royal. "The café was not very full," so I remember the story, "and there was nobody near us, but presently a gentleman and his wife came in and sat down at the next table. They were evidently people of good position, well dressed and distinguished in appearance. But they were talking French, and we paid not the slightest attention to them. We had lately got hold of the works of Thomas Aquinas, and our conversation was on the most extraordinary medley of subjects—on men, women, and things, with a very large leaven of mediæval theology, and on all we spoke in English with the most startling frankness and with the most bewildering transitions. Bob is the best talker in the world; I never knew him more brilliant, and I did my best.

"Those people sat and had their dinner and took not the slightest notice of us, but talked quietly to one another in Parisian French. Just before they got up to go, the gentleman turned to his wife and said to her in English without a trace of accent, 'My dear, won't you take anything more?' I have often won-

dered who they were, and what on earth they thought of us."

His deficiencies in letter-writing and his protracted absences from home led very naturally to protests from his parents and especially from his mother. The answer was characteristic.

"*Euston Hotel, 16th Oct.*, 1874.

"You must not be vexed at my absences. You must understand that I shall be a nomad, more or less, until my days be done. You don't know how much I used to long for it in old days; how I used to go and look at the trains leaving, and wish to go with them. And now, you know, that I have a little more that is solid under my feet, you must take my nomadic habits as a part of me. Just wait till I am in swing, and you will see that I shall pass more of my life with you than elsewhere; only take me as I am, and give me time. I *must* be a bit of a vagabond; it's your own fault, after all, isn't it? You shouldn't have had a tramp for a son."

While the man was in the making during these years, the writer also was passing through the stages of a development which was unusually protracted. The perfecting of his style was necessarily a work of time, but in the meanwhile, if he had seen his way to use the gifts at his command, his love of romance, his imagination, and his vivid interest in life might well have enabled him to produce work which would have secured him immediate popularity and reward.

Nothing of the sort, however, was accomplished,

and, high as his standard always was, this delay may well have been a gain for his ultimate success. During the six years between his first appearance as a printed and paid author and the publication of the *Travels with a Donkey*, his published work consisted of some six-and-twenty magazine articles, chiefly critical and social essays, just half of which were in the *Cornhill Magazine*; two small books of travel; two books in serial instalments, afterwards reprinted; and five short stories also in periodicals. There were besides a few rejected articles, a certain amount of journalism, and at least eight stories or novels, none of which ever saw the light, as well as a play or two and some verses, a small part of which were ultimately included in his published works.

In 1874 he had five articles in four different magazines: these included "Ordered South" in *Macmillan's*, and, still more important, the paper on "Victor Hugo's Romances" in the *Cornhill*. The former, which took him three months to write, was his first work ever republished in its original form; the latter, which was anonymous, but afterwards reappeared in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, marked, in his own judgment, the beginning of his command of style. Long afterwards in Samoa, in answer to a question, he told me that in this essay he had first found himself able to say several things in the way in which he felt they should be said. It may also be noticed that this was his first appearance in the magazine which by the discernment of Leslie Stephen did so much for him in taking his early work.

In January, 1875, Stevenson proposed to *The*

Academy a series of papers on the Parnassiens—de Banville, Coppée, Soulary, and Prudhomme—and when this was not accepted, he devoted a good deal of his time to the study of the French literature of the fifteenth century, which resulted in the articles on Villon and Charles of Orleans. The same reading led to the experiments in the French verse metres of that date which were almost contemporary with the work of Mr. Andrew Lang and of Mr. Austin Dobson, who brought the Ballade and Rondeau back to favour in England.

To 1876 we owe the only piece of dramatic criticism that Stevenson ever published, and four articles in the *Cornhill Magazine*, which from this time onward marked all his contributions to its pages with the initials R. L. S.

The same year thrice saw the rejection of the article on "Some Portraits by Raeburn," afterwards included in *Virginibus Puerisque*. It was refused in turn by the *Cornhill*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and *Blackwood's Magazine*, though it is only fair to Stephen to say that he helped the author in trying to place it elsewhere.

The event of this year was, of course, the canoe voyage. Stevenson, as we have already seen, had for some time shared his friends' taste for navigating the Firth of Forth in these craft, which the enthusiasm of "Rob Roy" Macgregor had made popular ten years before. A good deal of time was spent, as we have seen, on the river at Grez, and canoes were introduced there by the English colony, headed by Sir Walter Simpson and his brother, and by R. A. M.

Stevenson, who devised a leather canoe of his own "with a niche for everything," and, as his friends said, "a place for nothing." Mr. Warington Baden-Powell had published in the pages of the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1870 the log of the *Nautilus* and *Isis* canoes on a journey through Sweden and on the Baltic. But the idea of the journey itself seems to have been suggested by *Our Autumn Holiday on French Rivers*, by Mr. J. L. Molloy, published in 1874, the account of a journey up the Seine and down the Loire in a four-oared outrigger.

That the cruise itself was on the whole rather a cheerless experience is seen by the following letter.

"*Compiègne, 9th Sept.* 1876. [*Canoe Voyage.*]

"We have had deplorable weather quite steady ever since the start; not one day without heavy showers; and generally much wind and cold wind forby. . . . I must say it has sometimes required a stout heart; and sometimes one could not help sympathising inwardly with the French folk who hold up their hands in astonishment over our pleasure journey. . . . I wake at six every morning; and we are generally in bed and asleep before half-past nine. Last night I found my way to my room with a dark cloud of sleep over my shoulders, so thick that the candle burnt red at about the hour of 8.40. If that isn't healthy, egad, I wonder what is."

But to this voyage and its tranquil setting the irony of Time has since given a fresh and strange interest. The route of the canoes was by canal from Antwerp to Brussels, and thence (after a train jour-

ney) from Maubeuge by the rivers Sambre and Oise to Pontoise near the Seine. The central part of their course lay through places whose names became familiar to foreign ears in 1914, and now fill our memories with associations wholly different from the peaceful tenour of a holiday voyage. Maubeuge, Landrecies, Moy, La Fère, Chauny, Noyon, Précy, and the rivers Aisne and Oise are well known now to many brave men who have never heard of the *Inland Voyage* or its author. But even when Stevenson was traversing these waters the French nation was preparing by autumn manœuvres for the great struggle of forty years later, and through his descriptions there runs the military note. At Compiègne "Reservery and general *Militarismus* (as the Germans call it) were rampant. A camp of conical white tents without the town looked like a leaf out of a picture Bible; sword belts decorated the walls of the cafés; and the streets kept sounding all day long to military music." German shells from the siege of La Fère still embellished the inn-room at Moy: at "La Fère of Cursed Memory" itself the artillery were practising, and the town was full of military reservists, who "walked speedily and wore their formidable great-coats." And of Landrecies he wrote: "It was just the place to hear the round going by at night in the darkness, with the solid tramp of men marching, and the startling reverberations of the drum. It reminded you that even this place was a point in the great warfaring system of Europe, and might on some future day be ringed about with cannon smoke and thunder, and make itself a name among strong towns."

CHAPTER VII

TRANSITION—1876–79

"You may paddle all day long; but it is when you come back at nightfall, and look in at the familiar room, that you find Love or Death awaiting you beside the stove; and the most beautiful adventures are not those we go to seek."

The concluding words of "An Inland Voyage."

THE next three years of Stevenson's life were so closely similar to the three preceding, that at first sight, but for his own selection of the age of five-and-twenty as the limit of youth, it might seem almost unnecessary to draw any division between them. He continued to spend his time between France, London, and Edinburgh, to lead a more or less independent life, and to give the best of his talents and industry to his now recognised profession. The year 1877 was marked by the acceptance of the first of his stories ever printed—*A Lodging for the Night*—and from that date his fiction began to take its place beside, and gradually to supersede, the essays with which his career had opened. The month of May 1878 saw not only the appearance of his first book—*An Inland Voyage*—but also the beginning of his two first serial publications—the *New Arabian Nights* and the *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh;* and they were followed at the end of the year by the *Edinburgh* in book form, and in June 1879 by the *Travels with a Donkey.* All these, however, were but

a measure of the author's growing reputation, and of the facility with which he could now find a publisher.

Original as these writings were, and unlike the work of his contemporaries, none of them constituted any new departure in his life or any alteration in his attitude to the world: and the change that now came arrived from another quarter. His friendships, as we have seen, counted for a great deal with Stevenson, and though the roll of them was not yet closed, and ended indeed only at his death, it was at the beginning of this period that he made the acquaintance which affected him more than any other—he now met for the first time the lady who was afterwards to be his wife.

Already it is becoming difficult to realise that there was a time not long distant when study for all the professions, including that of art, was hedged about with arbitrary restrictions for women. At the date of which I am speaking these limitations had been removed to some extent in Paris as far as the studios were concerned, but the natural consequences had not yet followed in country quarters, and women artists were as yet unknown in any of the colonies about Fontainebleau. Hitherto these societies had been nearly as free from the female element as were afterwards the early novels of Stevenson himself: the landlady, the chambermaid, the peasant girl passed across the stage, but the leading rôles were filled by men alone. But when Stevenson and Sir Walter Simpson, the "Arethusa" and the "Cigarette," came from the Inland Voyage to their quarters at Grez,

they found the colony in trepidation at the expected arrival of the invader.

The new-comers, however, were neither numerous nor formidable; being only an American lady and her two children—a young girl and a boy. Mrs. Osbourne had seen her domestic happiness break up in California, and had come to France for the education of her family. She and her daughter had thrown themselves with ardour into the pursuit of painting, and thus became acquainted with some of the English and American artists in Paris. After profiting by the opportunities afforded them in the capital, they were in search of country lodgings, and accordingly, having taken counsel with their artist friends, they came to Grez.

So here for the first time Stevenson saw the woman whom Fate had brought half-way across the world to meet him. He straightway fell in love; he knew his own mind, and in spite of all dissuasions and difficulties, his choice never wavered. The difficulties were so great and hope so remote that nothing was said to his parents or to any but two or three of his closest friends. But in the meantime life took on a cheerful hue, and the autumn passed brightly for them all until the middle of October, when Stevenson must return to Edinburgh, there to spend the winter.

In January 1877 he came to London for a fortnight, and first met Edmund Gosse, who, being immediately added to the ranks of his intimate friends, has given us a most vivid and charming description of the effect produced on strangers at that time by Stevenson.

"It was in 1877, or late in 1876, that I was presented to Stevenson, at the old Savile Club, by Mr. Sidney Colvin, who thereupon left us to our devices. We went downstairs and lunched together, and then we adjourned to the smoking-room. As twilight came on I tore myself away, but Stevenson walked with me across Hyde Park, and nearly to my house. He had an engagement, and so had I, but I walked a mile or two back with him. The fountains of talk had been unsealed, and they drowned the conventions. I came home dazzled with my new friend, saying, as Constance does of Arthur, 'Was ever such a gracious creature born?'

". . . . Those who have written about him from later impressions than those of which I speak, seem to me to give insufficient prominence to the gaiety of Stevenson. It was his cardinal quality in those early days. A childlike mirth leaped and danced in him; he seemed to skip upon the hills of life. He was simply bubbling with quips and jests; his inherent earnestness or passion about abstract things was incessantly relieved by jocosity; and when he had built one of his intellectual castles in the sand, a wave of humour was certain to sweep in and destroy it. I cannot, for the life of me, recall any of his jokes; and written down in cold blood, they might not be funny if I did. They were not wit so much as humanity, the many-sided outlook upon life. I am anxious that his laughter-loving mood should not be forgotten, because later on it was partly, but I think never wholly, quenched by ill-health, responsibility, and the advance of years.

"My experience of Stevenson during these first years was confined to London, upon which he would make sudden piratical descents, staying a few days or weeks, and melting into air again. He was much at my house; and it must be told that my wife and I, as young married people, had possessed ourselves of a house too large for our slender means immediately to furnish. The one person who thoroughly approved of our great, bare, absurd drawing-room was Louis, who very earnestly dealt with us on the immorality of chairs and tables, and desired us to sit always, as he delighted to sit, upon hassocks on the floor. Nevertheless, as armchairs and settees straggled into existence, he handsomely consented to use them, although never in the usual way, but with his legs thrown sideways over the arms of them, or the head of a sofa treated as a perch. In particular, a certain shelf, with cupboards below, attached to a bookcase, is worn with the person of Stevenson, who would spend half an evening while passionately discussing some great question of morality or literature, leaping sideways in a seated posture to the length of this shelf, and then back again. He was eminently peripatetic, too, and never better company than walking in the street, this exercise seeming to inflame his fancy."

It was in these years especially that he gave the impression of something transitory and unreal, sometimes almost inhuman.

"He was careful, as I have hardly known any other man to be, not to allow himself to be burdened by the weight of material things. It was quite a jest

with us that he never acquired any possessions. In the midst of those who produced books, pictures, prints, *bric-à-brac*, none of these things ever stuck to Stevenson. There are some deep-sea creatures, the early part of whose life is spent dancing through the waters; at length some sucker or tentacle touches a rock, adheres, pulls down more tentacles, until the creature is caught there, stationary for the remainder of its existence. So it happens to men, and Stevenson's friend caught the ground with a house, a fixed employment, a 'stake in life'; he alone kept dancing in the free element, unattached."

These were the days when he most frequented the Savile Club, and the lightest and most vivacious part of him there came to the surface. He might spend the morning in working or business, and would then come to the Club for luncheon. If he were so fortunate as to find any congenial companions disengaged, or to induce them to throw over their engagements, he would lead them off to the smoking-room, and there spend an afternoon in the highest spirits and the most brilliant and audacious talk.

The whim of independence already mentioned was carried out to an extreme by the two Stevenson cousins, about this time, in one of their visits to Paris, an experience which Louis afterwards transferred to the pages of *The Wrecker*. "Stennis," it may be explained, was the nearest approach to their name possible to Barbizon, and accordingly it was as Stennis *aîné* and Stennis *frère* that the pair were always known.

"The two Stennises had come from London, it

appeared, a week before with nothing but greatcoats and tooth-brushes. It was expensive to be sure, for every time you had to comb your hair a barber must be paid, and every time you changed your linen one shirt must be bought and another thrown away; but anything was better, argued these young gentlemen, than to be the slaves of haversacks. 'A fellow has to get rid gradually of all material attachments: that was manhood,' said they; 'and as long as you were bound down to anything—house, umbrella, or portmanteau—you were still tethered by the umbilical cord.'"

When he broke through this rule, his inconsistency was equally original and unexpected.

"*Paris, Jan.* 1878.—I have become a bird fancier. I carry six little creatures no bigger than my thumb about with me almost all the day long; they are so pretty; and it is so nice to waken in the morning and hear them sing." Six or seven years later he again alludes to these or to other similar pets. "There is only one sort of bird that I can tolerate caged, though even then I think it hard, and that is what is called in France the Bec-d'Argent. I once had two of these pigmies in captivity; and in the quiet, bare house upon a silent street where I was then living, their song, which was not much louder than a bee's, but airily musical, kept me in a perpetual good-humour. I put the cage upon my table when I worked, carried it with me when I went for meals, and kept it by my head at night: the first thing in the morning these *maestrini* would pipe up."

The following letter written from Paris has pre-

served a record of one of the thousand little kind and thoughtful acts, which were so characteristic of Stevenson. Most of them are nameless and unremembered, but this—thanks to his perception of its humour—has been handed down to us.

"*1st Feb.* 1877, *Paris.*—My dear mother,—I have ordered a picture. There is magnificence for you. Poor —— is, as usual, hard up, and I knew wanted to make me a present of a sketch; so I took the first word and offered him 50f. for one. You should have seen us. I was so embarrassed that I could not finish a single phrase, and kept beginning, 'You know,' and 'You understand,' and 'Look here, ——,' and ending in pitiful intervals of silence. I was perspiring all over. Suddenly I saw —— begin to break out all over in a silvery dew; and he just made a dive at me and took me in his arms—in a kind of champion comique style, you know, but with genuine feeling."

This letter is also an indirect confirmation of what has been said in the preceding chapter as to Stevenson's poverty. About this time, however, his father followed the precedent set in his own case, and paid to Louis as an instalment of his patrimony a considerable sum, amounting, I believe, to not less than a thousand pounds. The fact is certain, the date and exact details have been lost. In the end Stevenson derived small benefit himself. "The little money he had," as Sir Sidney Colvin says, "was always absolutely at the disposal of his friends." In 1877 he had still £800, but, owing to misfortunes befalling his friends, in none of which was he under any obligation to intervene, within less than two years nothing

of it remained. His income from writing was as yet extremely small, the payment for his essays amounting to a guinea a page, so that until 1878 he probably from all sources had never made £50 in any one year.

If the year 1877 had little to show, it was only because much of it was spent in preparing for the next year's harvest. 1878 was at once in quantity and in quality the richest year he had yet known. *An Inland Voyage* was published in May: the journey with the donkey was taken, and an elaborate diary of it kept: there were four essays and a story in *Cornhill;* three essays, a story, and the *New Arabian Nights* in *London;* a story in *Temple Bar;* while *Picturesque Notes of Edinburgh* ran in the *Portfolio* from June till December, and then came out in book form.

London was a weekly journal, founded by Robert Glasgow Brown, Stevenson's colleague on the *Edinburgh University Magazine*, and after December 1877 edited by W. E. Henley, who some time before had left Edinburgh.

Much of Henley's lighter verse appeared first in its columns, and among its less irregular contributors were Mr. Andrew Lang, and the late Grant Allen and James Runciman. It was a staunch opponent of Mr. Gladstone and all his works, and won the favourable notice of Lord Beaconsfield. But the foundations of its finance were laid in sand, and it survived its originator little more than a year. It was the first paper edited by Henley, but though he never admitted to his columns work more brilliant of its kind, the *Arabian Nights* series was supposed

by more than one of the proprietors sufficiently to account for the unpopularity of their journal.

The conception of these stories is recorded in a letter to R. A. M. Stevenson. "The first idea of all was the hansom cabs, which I communicated to you in your mother's drawing-room in Chelsea. The same afternoon the Prince de Galles and the Suicide Club were invented, and several more now forgotten." The first half was actually written partly at Burford Bridge, partly at Swanston, while the *Rajah's Diamond* was written at Monastier, before the author set out with his *ânesse*. *The Sire de Malêtroit's Door* (Door being substituted for the original "Mousetrap") was invented in France, first told over the fire one evening in Paris, and ultimately written at Penzance.

Providence and the Guitar was based upon a story told by a strolling French actor and his Bulgarian wife, who had stayed at Grez. The man had played inferior parts at a good theatre, and the woman also had been on the stage. They were quiet, innocent creatures, who spent all the daytime in fishing in the river. They had their meals on a bare table in the kitchen, and in the evening they sang in the dining-room and had a little "tombola" as in the story. They made the best of the most hideous poverty, but the worst of it was that they were forced to leave their only child with a peasant woman, while they were tramping from village to village. She had let the child fall, and it was in consequence a hunchback. Stevenson had much talk with them, taking great pleasure in their company and delight in hear-

ing of their experiences. But there is no further foundation for the legend that he went strolling with them, or ever acted to a French audience. When his story appeared in print he sent to the pair the money it brought him, and he received a most charming letter of thanks, which unfortunately has disappeared.

In 1877 Stevenson having spent part of February and of June and July in France, returned there again from August to November, and spent some time with Sir Walter Simpson either at Nemours or at Moret where the Loing joins the Seine. Their experience of the Oise had suggested the charms of the life on board a barge, their imagination was kindled, nothing would content them but to acquire such a vessel for themselves, well found in all things they could desire, picturesque and romantic as craft had never yet been; and in this fashion they should make a leisurely progress along the waterways of Europe.

"There should be no white fresher, and no green more emerald than ours, in all the navy of the canals. There should be books in the cabin, and tobacco jars, and some old Burgundy as red as a November sunset, and as fragrant as a violet in April."

The *Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne* was "procured and christened," but on that cruise and under that flag she never started. A financial difficulty arose, and both barge and canoes alike had to be sold.

In 1878 he seems to have spent no more than a fortnight in Scotland until December, although he was in London four or five times. In April he stayed

with his parents at the inn at Burford Bridge, under Box Hill, "with its arbours and green garden and silent, eddying river," "known already as the place where Keats wrote some of his *Endymion*, and Nelson parted from his Emma," and connected hereafter, it may be, with the *New Arabian Nights*, and the friendship between Stevenson and George Meredith, of which this visit saw the beginning. All this summer he was acting as private secretary to Professor Fleeming Jenkin, who was a juror at the International Exhibition at Paris; the only post approaching any regular position or employment that Stevenson ever held.

An Inland Voyage had been accepted by Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. at the beginning of the year; and on the 17th February we find the author writing from Paris: "I have now been four days writing a—preface, a weary preface."

A week later he says: "I am getting a lot of work ready in my mind, and as soon as I am able to square my elbows, I shall put it through my hands rapidly. What a blessing work is! I don't think I could face life without it; and how glad I am I took to literature! It helps me so much."

In the whirl of Paris, during the same month, he wrote this letter to his father, sitting at a café in the Quartier Latin:

"*Café de la Source, Bd. St. Michel, Paris, 15th Feb. 1878.*

"A thought has come into my head which I think would interest you. Christianity is, among other things, a very wise, noble, and strange doctrine of life.

Nothing so difficult to specify as the position it occupies with regard to asceticism. It is not ascetic. Christ was of all doctors (if you will let me use the word) one of the least ascetic. And yet there is a theory of living in the gospels which is curiously indefinable, and leans towards asceticism on one side, although it leans away from it on the other. In fact, asceticism is used therein as a means, not as an end. The wisdom of this world consists in making oneself very little in order to avoid many knocks; in preferring others, in order that, even when we lose, we shall find some pleasure in the event; in putting our desires outside of ourselves, in another ship, so to speak, so that, when the worst happens, there will be something left. You see, I speak of it as a doctrine of life, and as a wisdom for this world. People must be themselves, I suppose. I feel every day as if religion had a greater interest for me; but that interest is still centred on the little rough-and-tumble world in which our fortunes are cast for the moment. I cannot transfer my interests, not even my religious interests, to any different sphere. . . . I have had some sharp lessons and some very acute sufferings in these last seven-and-twenty years—more even than you would guess. I begin to grow an old man; a little sharp, I fear, and a little close and unfriendly; but I still have a good heart, and believe in myself and my fellow-men and the God who made us all. . . . There are not many sadder people in the world, perhaps, than I. I have my eye on a sick-bed; I have written letters to-day that it hurts me to write, and I fear it will hurt others to receive; I am lonely and sick and

out of heart. Well, I still hope; I still believe; I still see the good in the inch, and cling to it. It is not much, perhaps, but it is always something.

"There is a fine text in the Bible, I don't know where, to the effect that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord. . . . Strange as it may seem to you, everything has been, in one way or the other, bringing me a little nearer to what I think you would like me to be. 'Tis a strange world, indeed, but there is a manifest God for those who care to look for him.

"This is a very solemn letter for my surroundings in this busy café; but I had it on my heart to write it; and, indeed, I was out of the humour for anything lighter.—Ever your affectionate son,

"Robert Louis Stevenson.

"*P.S.*—While I am writing gravely, let me say one word more. I have taken a step towards more intimate relations with you. But don't expect too much of me. . . . Try to take me as I am. This is a rare moment, and I have profited by it; but take it as a rare moment. Usually I hate to speak of what I really feel, to that extent that when I find myself *cornered*, I have a tendency to say the reverse.

"R. L. S."

This graver tone was beginning to grow upon him, for all his spirits and light-heartedness. It seemed, indeed, as if happiness had shown him her face only that he might be filled with inextinguishable longing and regret. Mrs. Osbourne had hitherto remained in France, but this year she returned to California. All

was dark before them. She was not free to follow her inclination, and though the step of seeking a divorce was open to her, yet the interests and feelings of others had to be considered, and for the present all idea of a union was impossible. Stevenson, on his side, was still far from earning his own livelihood, and could not expect his parents to give their assistance or even their consent to the marriage. So there came the pain of parting without prospect of return, and he who was afterwards so long an exile from his friends, now suffered separation from his dearest by the breadth of a continent and an ocean.

At first he continued to lead his life as if nothing had happened. After his Exhibition work was over, he went to Monastier, a mountain town near the sources of the Loire, and there occupied himself with a strenuous effort in completing both the *New Arabian Nights* and the *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh*, both at this time in their serial career.

At Monastier he spent some three weeks and completed his work, finding time also for some pencil sketches of the country and of the people, and obtaining, as always, a pleasant footing among the inhabitants, most of whom probably had never seen an Englishman (or Scotchman) in their lives.

On September 23rd he set out with his donkey on his eleven days' journey through the Cevennes, but here too his thoughts pursued him.

"I heard the voice of a woman singing some sad, old, endless ballad not far off. It seemed to be about love and a *bel amoureux*, her handsome sweetheart; and I wished I could have taken up the strain and

answered her, as I went on upon my invisible woodland way, weaving, like Pippa in the poem, my own thoughts with hers. What could I have told her? Little enough; and yet all the heart requires. How the world gives and takes away, and brings sweethearts near only to separate them again into distant and strange lands; but to love is the great amulet which makes the world a garden; and "hope, which comes to all," outwears the accidents of life, and reaches with tremulous hand beyond the grave and death. Easy to say: yea, but also, by God's mercy, both easy and grateful to believe!"

The *Inland Voyage* had been published in May, 1878, producing no more sensation than a small book, written for the sake of style by an unknown author, was likely to produce among the public, although the reviews showed uniform favour and occasional discernment. The author wrote to his mother: "I was more surprised at the tone of the critics than I suppose anyone else. And the effect it has produced on me is one of shame. If they liked that so much, I ought to have given them something better, that's all. And I shall try to do so. Still it strikes me as odd; and I don't understand the vogue."

The *Travels with a Donkey* were written in the winter and published in June, 1879. In the spring Louis wrote to R. A. M. Stevenson: "My book is through the press. It has good passages. I can say no more. . . . Lots of it is mere protestations to F., most of which I think you will understand. That is to me the main thread of interest. Whether the damned public——But that's all one."

He returned to London and began to collaborate with Henley in a play based on the latest of his drafts of *Deacon Brodie*, which he had not touched since he was nineteen.

It was probably at this time that he made the social experiment recorded in the *Amateur Emigrant* of practising upon the public by "going abroad through a suburban part of London simply attired in a sleeve-waistcoat."

"The result was curious. I then learned for the first time, and by the exhaustive process, how much attention ladies are accustomed to bestow on all male creatures of their own station; for, in my humble rig, each one who went by me caused a certain shock of surprise and a sense of something wanting. In my normal circumstances, it appeared, every young lady must have paid me some passing tribute of a glance; and though I had often been unconscious of it when given, I was well aware of its absence when it was withheld. My height seemed to decrease with every woman who passed me, for she passed me like a dog. This is one of my grounds for supposing that what are called the upper classes may sometimes produce a disagreeable impression in what are called the lower; and I wish some one would continue my experiment, and find out exactly at what stage of toilette a man becomes invisible to the well-regulated female eye."

But life was not to be lived upon the old terms. His heart was elsewhere, and the news which reached him was disquieting. For some time it was fairly good; then Mrs. Osbourne fell seriously ill. There

had been, there could be, no restoration of her home life; but it appeared that she would be able to obtain a divorce without causing any unnecessary distress to her family, and in this conjuncture Stevenson could not see clearly what his course of action ought to be. He was first at Swanston with Henley, finishing *Deacon Brodie*; then in London; at Swanston again, this time alone, writing his chapters on *Lay Morals*; then at the Gareloch with his parents. In May he went to London, and, after staying with George Meredith, crossed over to France. Had he found a companion, he would perhaps have gone to the Pyrenees, but he spent most of his time at Cernay la Ville, and returned to London in the end of June.

The *Travels with a Donkey* had been published by that time, obtaining the same unsubstantial success as the *Inland Voyage*, although, contrary to its author's own judgment of the two books, it afterwards had slightly the better sale.

On 14th July he returned to Edinburgh, and by the 30th his mind was made up—to California he must go. From Edinburgh he came back to London, presumably to make arrangements for his start; and wherever he went, he found his friends unanimous in their opinion that he ought to stay at home. Under these circumstances it seemed to him so hopeless to expect any other judgment on the part of his parents, that he did not even go through the form of consulting them on the matter, and with open eyes went away, knowing that he need look for no further countenance from home. Perhaps he hardly

realised the distress which he would inevitably cause his parents by leaving them without a word and in almost total ignorance of the hopes and motives which inspired him.

CHAPTER VII

CALIFORNIA—1879-80

"What a man truly wants, that will he get, or he will be changed in trying."—R. L. S., Aphorism.

"To My Wife.

"Trusty, dusky, vivid, true,
With eyes of gold and bramble-dew,
Steel-true and blade-straight
The great artificer
Made my mate.

Honour, anger, valour, fire;
A love that life could never tire,
Death quench or evil stir,
The mighty master
Gave to her.

Teacher, tender, comrade, wife,
A fellow-farer true through life,
Heart-whole and soul-free
The august father
Gave to me."

Songs of Travel, No. xxvi.

FROM London he went north, and on August 7th, 1879, sailed from the Clyde in the steamship *Devonia*, bound for New York. She carried a number of emigrants, but Stevenson, though mixing freely with them, had, chiefly to obtain a table for his writing, taken his passage in the second cabin, which was almost indistinguishable from the steer-

age. His object in travelling in this fashion was, in the first instance, economy, and next to that, a desire to gain first-hand knowledge for himself of emigrants and emigration, which might be of immediate use for making a book and of ultimate service to him in a thousand ways. He suffered a good deal on the voyage, being already anxious and highly strung before he started, but he stuck manfully to his work and wrote "in a slantindicular cabin, with the table playing bob-cherry with the ink-bottle," the greater part of *The Story of a Lie*. The rest of his time he devoted to making the acquaintance of his fellow-passengers, learning their histories, studying their characters, and —as anyone may see between the lines of *The Amateur Emigrant*—rendering them endless unobtrusive services, and helping and cheering them in every way possible.

The voyage passed without event, and the steamer arrived at New York on the evening of the 18th of August. Stevenson passed the night in a shilling Irish boarding-house, Re-Union House, No. 10 West Street. "A little Irish girl," he writes, "is now reading my book aloud to her sister at my elbow; they chuckle, and I feel flattered. *P.S.*—Now they yawn, and I am indifferent: such a wisely conceived thing is vanity."

Within four-and-twenty hours of his first arrival he was already on his way as an emigrant to the Far West; a chief part of his baggage being "Bancroft's *History of the United States* in six fat volumes."

The railway journey began in floods of rain and the maximum of discomfort. The record of it is in the

hands of all to read, and I need say only that it occupied from a Monday evening to the Saturday morning of the following week, and that the tedium and stress of the last few days in the emigrant train proper were almost unbearable.

On the 30th of August Stevenson reached San Francisco, but so much had the long journey shaken him that he looked like a man at death's door. The news so far was good; Mrs. Osbourne was better, but that was all. To recover from the effects of his hardships he forthwith went another hundred and fifty miles to the south, and camped out by himself in the coast range of mountains beyond Monterey. But he had overtaxed his strength, and broke down. Two nights he "lay out under a tree in a sort of stupor," and if two frontiersmen in charge of a goat-ranche had not taken him in and tended him, there would have been an end of his story.

"I am now lying in an upper chamber, with a clinking of goat bells in my ears, which proves to me that the goats are come home and it will soon be time to eat. The old bear-hunter is doubtless now infusing tea; and Tom the Indian will come in with his gun in a few minutes."

Here he spent a couple of weeks, passing the mornings in teaching the children to read, and then went down to Monterey, where he remained until the middle of December. In those days it still was a small Mexican town, altered but slightly by the extraordinarily cosmopolitan character of the few strangers who visited it. In his own words, it was "a place of two or three streets, economically paved with sea-

sand, and two or three lanes, which were water-courses in the rainy season, and at all times were rent up by fissures four or five feet deep. There were no street lights. . . . The houses were for the most part built of unbaked adobe brick, many of them old for so new a country, some of very elegant proportions, with low, spacious, shapely rooms, and walls so thick that the heat of summer never dried them to the heart. . . There was no activity but in and around the saloons, where people sat almost all day long playing cards. . . The smallest excursion was made on horseback. You would scarcely ever see the main street without a horse or two tied to posts, and making a fine figure with their Mexican housings. . . In a place so exclusively Mexican as Monterey, you saw not only Mexican saddles, but true Vaquero riding—men always at the hand-gallop up hill and down dale, and round the sharpest corner, urging their horses with cries and gesticulations and cruel rotatory spurs, checking them dead with a touch, or wheeling them right-about-face in a square yard. . . Spanish was the language of the streets. It was difficult to get along without a word or two of that language for an occasion. The only communications in which the population joined were with a view to amusement. A weekly public ball took place with great etiquette, in addition to the numerous fandangoes in private houses. There was a really fair amateur brass band. Night after night, serenaders would be going about the street, sometimes in a company and with several instruments and voices together, sometimes severally, each guitar be-

fore a different window. It was a strange thing to lie awake in nineteenth-century America, and hear the guitar accompany, and one of these old, heart-breaking Spanish love-songs mount into the night air, perhaps in a deep baritone, perhaps in that high-pitched, pathetic, womanish alto which is so common among Mexican men, and which strikes on the unaccustomed ear as something not entirely human, but altogether sad."

Here Stevenson found quarters curiously to his taste, which was simple, though discriminating. He lodged with the doctor, and for his meals went to a restaurant.

"Of all my private collection of remembered inns and restaurants—and I believe it, other things being equal, to be unrivalled—one particular house of entertainment stands forth alone. I am grateful, indeed, to many a swinging signboard, to many a rusty wine-bush; but not with the same kind of gratitude. Some were beautifully situated, some had an admirable table, some were the gathering-places of excellent companions; but take them for all in all, not one can be compared with Simoneau's at Monterey.

"To the front, it was part barbers' shop, part bar; to the back, there was a kitchen and a *salle a manger*. The intending diner found himself in a little, chill, bare, adobe room, furnished with chairs and tables, and adorned with some oil sketches roughly brushed upon the wall in the manner of Barbizon and Cernay. The table, at whatever hour you entered, was already laid with a not spotless napkin, and, by way of epergne, with a dish of green peppers and tomatoes,

pleasing alike to eye and palate. If you stayed there to meditate before a meal, you would hear Simoneau all about the kitchen, and rattling among the dishes."

The fragment breaks off, or we should have had a picture of M. Simoneau, the proprietor, with whom Stevenson "played chess and discussed the universe" daily. At his table there "sat down, day after day, a Frenchman, two Portuguese, an Italian, a Mexican, and a Scotsman; they had for common visitors an American from Illinois, a nearly pure-blood Indian woman, and a naturalised Chinese; and from time to time a Switzer and a German came down from country ranches for the night."

This society afforded Stevenson most of the diversion that he could now spare the time to enjoy. Of his adventures in the forest he has told us, and chiefly of that day, when, setting fire to a tree in mere experiment and idleness of mind, he ran for his life in fear of being lynched. But during all these weeks he was working as he had hardly worked before. Half of a novel called *A Vendetta in the West* was written, and the whole of *The Pavilion on the Links*, which he had begun in London, was despatched to England. But the strain of exertion and anxiety was too great, and "while leading a dull regular life in a mild climate," he developed pleurisy, and had for a few days to relax his exertions.

All this time he was the kindly and bright companion; his gaiety and courage never flagged. "There is something in me worth saying," he wrote to Henley, "though I can't find what it is just yet."

About the middle of December he came to San

Francisco, and there hired the cheapest lodging he could find, a single room in a poor house in Bush Street. All his meals he took outside at some of the small restaurants; he lived at seventy cents a day, and worked yet harder than before. He made inquiries about work on the San Francisco *Bulletin*, but the payment offered by that newspaper for literary articles was too small to be of any use to a writer so deliberate.

But the worst part of the change from Monterey was that he was thrown more upon himself. In place of the bright social life of the little Spanish town, a life such as is common on the Continent of Europe, but is hardly to be found in England, he was plunged into the terrible solitude of a large city. On the 26th December he writes: "For four days I have spoken to no one but my landlady or landlord, or to restaurant waiters. This is not a gay way to pass Christmas, is it? And again: "After weeks in this city, I know only a few neighbouring streets; I seemed to be cured of all my adventurous whims, and even of human curiosity, and am content to sit here by the fire and await the course of fortune."

His friends were very few, and those of but a few weeks' standing. They hardly extended, indeed, beyond Virgil Williams and his wife, the artist couple to whom *The Silverado Squatters* was afterwards dedicated, and Charles Warren Stoddard, whose picturesque lodging is commemorated in *The Wrecker*.

In Virgil Williams he found a man of great culture and refinement, a scholar as well as a painter, who was always ready to respond to his verses, and, to-

gether with his wife, able and eager to discuss the literatures of Europe. Their house was always open to Stevenson, and their only regret was that he could not come more frequently. To Charles Stoddard also he was no less welcome a companion; from him he borrowed the delightful books of Herman Melville, *Typee* and *Omoo*, and Stoddard's own *South Sea Idylls*, which charmed Stevenson alike with their subject and their style. So here in his darkest hour he received the second impulse, which in the end was to "cast him out as by a freshet" upon those "ultimate islands."

San Francisco itself was still far from a prosaic place; its early history and its large foreign population rendered it not less dangerous than picturesque. Kearney, the Irish demagogue, had only just "been snuffed out by Mr. Coleman, backed by his San Francisco Vigilantes and three Gatling guns." Stevenson himself was not without experiences, perhaps less uncommon there at that time than in other large cities. There are rough quarters where it is dangerous o' nights; cellars of public entertainment which the wary pleasure-seeker chooses to avoid. Concealed weapons are unlawful, but the law is continually broken. One editor was shot dead while I was there; another walked the streets accompanied by a bravo, his guardian angel. I have been quietly eating a dish of oysters in a restaurant, where, not more than ten minutes after I had left, shots were exchanged and took effect; and one night, about ten o'clock, I saw a man standing watchfully at a street corner with a long Smith-and-Wesson glittering

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in his hand behind his back. Somebody had done something he should not, and was being looked for with a vengeance."

But his private needs now pressed upon him; money was growing scarce; the funds he had brought with him were exhausted, and those transmitted from England, being partly his own money and partly the payment for his recent work, very frequently failed to reach him. In the end of January he had to drop from a fifty cent to a twenty-five cent dinner, and already had directed his friend Charles Baxter to dispose of his books in Edinburgh and to send him the proceeds.

His prospects were gloomy; for although the manuscripts he had sent home were accepted by editors, yet the judgment of his friends upon some of them was justly unfavourable, and at this crisis he could not afford rejection or even delay in payment.

His correspondence with his parents since his departure had been brief and unsatisfactory. His father, being imperfectly informed as to his motives and plans, naturally took that dark view of his son's conduct to which his temperament predisposed him. But even so, hearing of Louis' earlier illness, he sent him a twenty-pound note, though, as fate would have it, this was one of the letters that miscarried.

Lonely, ill, and poor; estranged from his people, unsuccessful in his work, and discouraged in his attempt to maintain himself, Stevenson yet did not lose heart or go back for one moment from his resolution. He wrote to Baxter: *20th Jan.*—"I have great fun trying to be economical, which I find as good a game to play as any other."

It was at this time that he wrote the best-known of

all his verses, the *Requiem*, beginning, "Under the wide and starry sky," which fifteen years later was to mark his grave upon the lonely hilltop in Samoa with the spirited proclamation: "Glad did I live and gladly die."

He stuck to his work; even, a harder feat, he had the determination to give himself a week's holiday. But though his spirit was indomitable, his physical powers were exhausted; his landlady's small child was very ill, and he sat up nursing it. The child recovered, but Stevenson a short while afterwards broke down, and could go on no more.

He was, as he afterwards wrote to Mr. Gosse, on the verge of a galloping consumption, subject to cold sweats, prostrating attacks of cough, sinking fits in which he lost the power of speech, fever, and all the ugliest circumstances of the disease.

Fortunately by this date his future wife had obtained her divorce, and was at liberty to give him as nurse those services, for which there was unfortunately only too frequent occasion during the next few years. It was a very anxious time, and he was nearer "the grey ferry" than he had been since childhood. Slowly he mended, and his recovery was helped by his letters and telegrams from home. Already by the middle of February he must have heard that his father admitted that the case was not what he supposed, and that if there were as long a delay as possible, he was prepared to do his best in the matter. At that very date Mr. Stevenson was writing again that it was preposterous of Louis to scrimp himself, and that if he would inform him what money he wanted, it would be sent by tele-

gram, if required. And early in April a telegram came, announcing to Louis that in future he might count upon two hundred and fifty pounds a year. His gratitude was unbounded, he realised very clearly what his extremity had been and the fate from which he had been rescued.

To Mr. Baxter again he wrote:

"It was a considerable shock to my pride to break down; but there—it's done, and cannot be helped. Had my health held out another month, I should have made a year's income; but breaking down when I did, I am surrounded by unfinished works. It is a good thing my father was on the spot, or I should have had to work and die."

All obstacles were at last removed, and on May 19, 1880, Robert Louis Stevenson was married to Fanny Van de Grift at San Francisco, in the house of the Rev. Dr. Scott, no one else but Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Williams being present.

Of the marriage it need only be said that from the beginning to the end husband and wife were all in all to one another. His friends rejoiced to find in her, as Sir Sidney Colvin says, "a character as strong, interesting, and romantic almost as his own; an inseparable sharer of all his thoughts, and staunch companion of all his adventures; the most open-hearted of friends to all who loved him; the most shrewd and stimulating critic of his work; and in sickness, despite her own precarious health, the most devoted and most efficient of nurses."

Two years before his death Stevenson wrote, in reference to another love match: "To be sure it is

always annoying when people choose their own wives; and I know only one form of consolation—they know best what they want. As I look back, I think my marriage was the best move I ever made in my life. Not only would I do it again; I cannot conceive the idea of doing otherwise."

Of his devotion to his wife he was even more reticent than of his affection to his parents. "I love my wife," he once wrote, "I do not know how much, nor can, nor shall, unless I lost her." And once or twice in letters to those who knew and loved them best, he almost unconsciously revealed his affection, which, for the rest, is embodied in the lyric written a year or two before his death, and printed at the head of this chapter. As he lived, so he died, and the last moments of his consciousness were occupied with the attempt to lift the burden of foreboding which was weighing so heavily upon his wife.

Immediately after the marriage Stevenson and his wife and his stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, went to the country fifty miles north of San Francisco, to seek health in the mountains. How they took possession of all that was left of a mining-town, and lived in independence among the ruins, is told once for all in *The Silverado Squatters*; but it is not mentioned that Mrs. Stevenson and her boy there sickened of diphtheria, and that the anxiety and danger of a serious illness were added to their lot.

By this time Stevenson knew that his father and mother were longing for nothing in the world so much as to see his face again, to make the

acquaintance of his wife, and to welcome her for his sake.

It was not however until July was well advanced that the party could leave Calistoga, but on the seventh of August they sailed from New York, and, ten days later, found Thomas Stevenson and his wife and Sidney Colvin waiting for them at Liverpool.

In California the year before, Louis had written of his father: "Since I have gone away, I have found out for the first time how I love that man; he is dearer to me than all, except Fanny." And now his joy at seeing his parents was heightened, if possible, by the share which his wife had in their reception. Any doubts that had existed as to the wisdom of his choice were soon driven from their minds, and the new-comer was received into their affection with as much readiness and cordiality as if it were they and not Louis who had made the match. Old Mr. Stevenson in particular discovered in his daughter-in-law so many points which she possessed in common with himself, that his natural liking passed rapidly into an appreciation and affection such as are usually the result only of years of intimacy. In his own wife's notes I find that before his death he made his son promise that he would "never publish anything without Fanny's approval."

In consequence of the new order of things, Swanston Cottage had finally been given up early in the summer, and the family party, passing hastily through Edinburgh, went on first to Blair Athol and then to Strathpeffer, returning to Heriot Row in the middle of September.

The exile's return to his native country was of short duration, for the hardships he had endured and his consequent illness had rendered him quite unable to face a Scottish winter. On consulting his uncle, Dr. George Balfour, the well-known Edinburgh doctor, he was informed of his condition, and advised to try the climate of the High Alps, which had lately come into favour as a resort for patients suffering from phthisis.

Accordingly, on October 7th Stevenson left Edinburgh with his wife and stepson and a new member of the family, who held a high place in their affections, and was an important element in all their arrangements for the next half-dozen years. This was a black Skye terrier, a present from Sir Walter Simpson, after whom he was called, until "Wattie" had passed into "Woggs," and finally became unrecognisable as "Bogue." In Heriot Row every dog worshipped Thomas Stevenson (with the sole exception of "Jura," who was alienated by jealousy) and so Louis never had a dog until now who really regarded him as owner. But Woggs was a person of great character, with views and a temper of his own, entirely devoted to his master and mistress, and at odds with the world at large.

In London, Dr. Andrew Clark confirmed both the opinion and the advice which had been given, and a few days only were spent in seeing Stevenson's friends, who now found their first opportunity to welcome him back and to make the acquaintance of his wife.

CHAPTER IX

DAVOS AND THE HIGHLANDS—1880–82

"A mountain valley, an Alpine winter, and an invalid's weakness make up among them a prison of the most effective kind."

R. L. S. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21st February, 1881

BY the middle of October the party again started, made a journey broken by frequent halts, and on the fourth of November reached Davos Platz, where they were to spend the winter. They took up their quarters in the Hotel Belvedere, the nucleus of the present large establishment, and there they stayed until the following April.

The great feature of the place for Stevenson was the presence of John Addington Symonds, who, having come there three years before on his way to Egypt, had taken up his abode in Davos, and was now building himself a house. To him, the newcomer bore a letter of introduction from Mr. Gosse. On November 5th, Louis wrote to his mother: "We got to Davos last evening; and I feel sure we shall like it greatly. I saw Symonds this morning, and already like him; it is such sport to have a literary man around. My father can understand me, when he thinks what it would be to come up here for a winter and find TAIT.[1] Symonds is like a Tait to

[1] Professor P. G. Tait, the eminent man of science, Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, 1860–1901: a close friend of Thomas Stevenson.

me; eternal interest in the same topics, eternal cross-causewaying of special knowledge. That makes hours to fly." And a little later he wrote: "Beyond its splendid climate, Davos has but one advantage—the neighbourhood of J. A. Symonds. I dare say you know his work, but the man is far more interesting."[1]

This first winter Stevenson produced but little. The doctor in a few weeks spoke hopefully of his case, but the climate, though beneficial in the long run, was not at first conducive to any deliberate effort.

There was much that he disliked in Davos, more especially the cut-and-dry walks alone possible to him, the monotonous river, the snow (in which he could see no colour), and the confinement to a single valley. "The mountains are about you like a trap," he wrote; "you cannot foot it up a hillside and behold the sea as a great plain, but live in holes and corners, and can change only one for the other."

The drawbacks of hotel life seem to have affected him but little; he had the company of his wife, and a constant interest in his stepson, who, having brought the toy-press given him the previous spring in California and used at Silverado, now devoted to printing all the time he could secure from lessons with his tutor.

A characteristic story which I have from Mrs. Stevenson belongs to this period. When they were leaving for Davos, her father-in-law, warned by the experiences of Louis in California, made her promise that she would let him know if at any time they were in want of money.

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography, sub* "Symonds."

"The time came," she says, "when Louis had influenza and did need more, but he would not let me tell his father. I used every argument. At last I said, 'What do you think should be done with the money your father has so carefully laid by for the use of his family?' 'It should be given,' said Louis, 'to some young man of talent, who is in poor health and could not otherwise afford to get a necessary change of climate.' 'Oh, very well,' said I, 'I shall appeal to your father at once in the case of a young man named Stevenson, who is in just that position.' At this Louis could only laugh, and I wrote the story to his father, who was much amused by it, and of course sent the necessary supplies."

In these days, indeed, and, throughout his life, he was often unreasonable, but this very unreason seems always to have had a quality and a charm of its own, which only endeared Stevenson the more to those who suffered under its caprice, as two other anecdotes of Davos may serve to show. A young Church of England parson, who knew him but slightly, was roused one morning about six o'clock by a message that Stevenson wanted to see him immediately. Knowing how ill his friend was, he threw on his clothes and rushed to Stevenson's room, only to see a haggard face gazing from the bed-clothes, and to hear an agonised voice say "For God's sake——, have you got a Horace?"

Another friend had received from Italy a present of some Christmas roses, to which particular associations gave a personal sentiment and value. Stevenson was seeking high and low for some flowers—the

occasion, I think, was the birthday of a girl who could never live to see another—he heard of the arrival of these. He came, he stated the paramount necessity of depriving his friend, and he bore the flowers away. The two stories might end here, and show Stevenson in rather an unamiable light: their point is that neither of his friends ever dreamed of resenting his conduct or regarding it with any other feeling but affectionate amusement.

Often in the evening he would turn into the billiard-room, and there his talk might be heard at its best. A fellow-visitor has given a spirited and sympathetic description of him in those days, and adds: "Once only do I remember seeing him play a game of billiards and a truly remarkable performance it was. He played with all the fire and dramatic intensity that he was apt to put into things. The balls flew wildly about, on or off the table as the case might be, but seldom indeed ever threatened a pocket or got within a hand's-breadth of a cannon. 'What a fine thing a game of billiards is,' he remarked to the astonished onlookers, '—once a year or so!'"

When he was well, Stevenson had to be out of doors a good deal, and spent the time mostly in walks, often with his dog for a companion.

"15*th December* 1880.—My dear Mother,—I shall tell you about this morning. When I got out with Woggs about half-past seven, the sky was low and grey; the Tinzenhorn, and the other high peaks were covered. It had snowed all night, a fine, soft snow; and all the ground had a gloss, almost a burnish, from the new coating. The woods were elaborately

powdered grey—not a needle but must have had a crystal. In the road immediately below me, a long train of sack-laden sledges was going by, drawn by four horses, with an indescribable smoothness of motion, and no sound save that of the bells. On the other road, across the river, four or five empty sledges were returning towards Platz, some of the drivers sitting down, some standing up in their vehicles; they glided forward without a jolt or a tremor, not like anything real, but like cardboard figures on a toy-like theatre. I wonder if you can understand how odd this looked."

Occasionally he joined in skating and, more frequently, in the tobogganing then newly introduced.

"Perhaps," he wrote, "the true way to toboggan is alone and at night. First comes the tedious climb, dragging your instrument behind you. Next a long breathing space, alone, with snow and pine woods, cold, silent, and solemn to the heart. Then you push off; the toboggan fetches way; she begins to feel the hill, to glide, to swim, to gallop. In a breath you are out from under the pine-trees, and a whole heavenful of stars reels and flashes overhead. Then comes a vicious effort; for by this time your wooden steed is speeding like the wind, and you are spinning round a corner, and the whole glittering valley and the lights in all the great hotels lie for a moment at your feet; and the next you are racing once more in the shadow of the night, with close shut teeth and beating heart. Yet a little while and you will be landed on the highroad by the door of your own hotel. This, in an atmosphere tingling with forty degrees of frost,

in a night made luminous with stars and snow, and girt with strange white mountains, teaches the pulse an unaccustomed tune, and adds a new excitement to the life of man upon his planet."

A health-resort, from its very conditions, often casts upon a visitor shadows of death and bereavement, but this year the Stevensons were affected with the deepest sympathy for a loss that touched them nearly; their friend Mrs. Sitwell arrived unexpectedly with her son, who was already in the last stages of a swift consumption, and before the end came in April, there were but the alternations of despair and of hoping against hope until the blow fell.

Shortly afterwards Stevenson and his wife set out for France, accompanied only by Woggs, for the boy had gone to England to school. They spent several weeks, first at Barbizon; then in Paris, whence they were driven by drains; and at St. Germain, where Stevenson for the first time in his life heard a nightingale sing, and, having proclaimed that no sounds in nature could equal his favourite blackbird, forthwith surrendered all prejudice and fell into an ecstasy. They found themselves in straits at St. Germain, owing to the failure of supplies and the general suspicious appearance of Stevenson's wardrobe; being suddenly delivered from insults, they left their landlord, as Mrs. Stevenson alleged, in the belief that he had turned from his doors the eccentric son of a wealthy English nobleman.

They reached Edinburgh May 31st, 1881, and three days later started with his mother for Pitlochry,

where they spent two months at Kinnaird Cottage: his father coming to them as often as business permitted. Louis had written to his parents that for country quarters his desiderata were these: "A house, not an inn, at least not an hotel; a burn within reach; heather and a fir or two. If these can be combined, I shall be pretty happy." These requisites he found, and, indeed, the man would be hard to satisfy who asked more of any stream—"a little green glen with a burn, a wonderful burn, gold and green and snow-white, singing loud and low in different steps of its career, now pouring over miniature crags, now fretting itself to death in a maze of rocky stairs and pots; never was so sweet a little river. Behind, great purple moorlands reaching to Ben Vrackie."

In these two months he wrote "Thrawn Janet" and the "Merry Men." "The Body Snatcher" belongs to the same time, all three being intended for a volume of tales of the supernatural. For "Thrawn Janet" Stevenson afterwards claimed that if he had never written anything but this tale and the story of "Tod Lapraik" in *Catriona*, he would yet have been a writer. It was the outcome of a study of the Scotch literature of witchcraft, and is hardly open to any other criticism than that which its author himself found against it. "Thrawn Janet" has two defects; "it is true only historically, true for a hill parish in Scotland in old days, not true for mankind and the world. Poor Mr. Soulis' faults we may eagerly recognise as virtues, and we feel that by his conversion he was merely worsened; and this, although the story

carries me away every time I read it, leaves a painful impression on my mind."

On August 2nd the party left for Braemar; on the journey, Stevenson first conceived the family of Durrisdeer and the earlier part of *The Master of Ballantræ*, though both as yet were nameless, and it was six years and more before he began to set any word of it on paper.

At Braemar, having more accommodation, they were able to enjoy the society of some of their friends —Sidney Colvin, Charles Baxter and others. One of the first who arrived was the late Dr. Alexander Hay Japp, a new acquaintance, invited to discuss Thoreau, and to set Stevenson right upon one or two points in his history. Thoreau was duly discussed, but before the visitor left, he heard the first eight or ten chapters of *Treasure Island*, then newly written, which he carried off in order to offer it to a publisher. Stevenson himself has told the history of the book. With what gusto he describes beginning the first chapter, in words that glow like the beginning of an adventure. "On a chill September morning, by the cheek of a brisk fire, and the rain drumming on the window, I began *The Sea Cook*, for that was the original title." Having first drawn the chart of an island (charts being to him "of all books the least wearisome to read and the richest in matter"), he then, from the names marked at random, constructed a story in order to please his schoolboy stepson, who asked him to try and write "something interesting"; his father, another schoolboy in disguise, took fire at this and urged him on, helping him with lists and sug-

gestions; unconscious memory came to his aid, and *Treasure Island* was half written.

Mr. Gosse immediately succeeded Dr. Japp as the family visitor, and under his congenial influence the story grew at the rate of a chapter a day; before Stevenson left Braemar, nineteen chapters had been written. As soon as the idea of publication occurred, the book had been intended for Messrs. Routledge, but by Dr. Japp's good offices it was accepted for *Young Folks* by Mr. Henderson, the proprietor, when he saw the opening chapters and heard an outline of the story.

In this summer Stevenson first began to write the verses for children, which were afterwards published in the *Child's Garden*. His mother tells how she had Miss Kate Greenaway's *Birthday Book for Children*, with verses by Mrs. Sale Barker, then newly published, and how Louis took it up one day, and saying, "These are rather nice rhymes, and I don't think they would be difficult to do," proceeded to try his hand. About fourteen numbers seem to have been written in the Highlands, and, apparently, after three more had been added, they were then discontinued for a time.

But in the meanwhile the weather grew suddenly bad; Stevenson made a hurried flight (in a respirator) from Braemar on September 23rd, and after a few days in Edinburgh, passed on to London. Here he called on his new publisher; "a very amusing visit indeed; ordered away by the clerks, who refused loudly to believe I had any business; and at last received most kindly by Mr. Henderson."

From London they passed to Paris and so to Davos, which they reached on October 18th. This year they had taken for the winter a chalet belonging to the Hotel Buol, where Symonds was still living; they hired a servant of their own, and only occasionally took meals in the hotel.

This winter differed considerably from the last. Stevenson was in better health, and being accustomed to the climate, and also less subject to interruption, produced a great deal more work, though, as before, a certain proportion of his labours was futile. *Treasure Island* was already beginning its serial course, with the latter half of it yet unwritten. Fortunately the inspiration that had failed the author returned, the last fourteen chapters took but a fortnight, and at the second wave the book was finished as easily as it was begun. It appeared under the signature of "Captain George North," and ran an obscure career in the pages of its magazine from October to January, openly mocked at by more than one indignant reader. But it did not make its appearance as a book till nearly two years later.

In January Stevenson gives an irresistible description of himself: "I dawdle on the balcony, read and write, and have fits of conscience and indigestion. The ingenious human mind, face to face with something it downright ought to do, *does something else*. But the relief is temporary."

Temporary also was the idleness. *The Silverado Squatters*, the record of the circumstances of his honeymoon, was written, and no less than five magazine articles, including the first part of "Talk and

Talkers" and the "Gossip on Romance." Still this did not satisfy him. He wrote to his mother: "I work, work away, and get nothing, or but little done; it is slow, slow, slow; but I sit from four to five hours at it, and read all the rest of the time for Hazlitt." And to Charles Baxter a little later he wrote: "I am getting a slow, steady, sluggish stream of ink over paper, and shall do better this year than last." Before April, he can say: "I have written something like thirty-five thousand words since I have been here, which shows at least I have been industrious."

To this time apparently belong the verses called "The Celestial Surgeon," which are as characteristic of Stevenson as anything he ever wrote. An eloquent modern preacher treating of the deadly sin of accidie, "gloom and sloth and irritation," the opposite of "the vertue that is called *fortitude* or strength," quotes these "graceful, noble lines" at length, and says, "Surely no poet of the present day, and none, perhaps, since Dante, has so truly told of the inner character of accidie, or touched more skilfully the secret of its sinfulness."

Housekeeping was a burden and a doubtful economy, but the chalet in other respects was a great success. For one thing, it got the sun an hour sooner, and kept it an hour later, than the hotels; for another, it provided its master with a spot where he was at liberty to create and develop for himself the amusement which pleased him best of all—the game of war. Deeds of arms would always raise a thrill in his breast, but so far as I know, there was no outward sign of this interest in warfare or strategy

during his youth or early manhood. In December 1878 he wrote from the Sabile Club: "I am in such glee about Peiwar, Lord Roberts's victory over the Afghans. I declared yesterday I was going to add the name to mine, and be Mr. Peiwar Stevenson for the future." In October 1880, an old general who was a friend of the family came to see him in London, and brought as a present Sir Edward Hamley's *Operations of War*. R. A. M. Stevenson was there at the time, and both cousins were transported with enthusiasm. "I am drowned in it a thousand fathom deep," wrote Louis, "and 'O that I had been a soldier' is still my cry." He had never made any affectation of abandoning a pursuit he was supposed to have outgrown. He clung to the colouring of prints and to childish paintings long after most boys of his age have given up the diversions of the nursery. A large part of the winter of 1877 he spent in building with toy-bricks in his room at Heriot Row, and regretted that he had not been an architect. Stevenson, deterred by no false shame, always extracted from toys much of the zest of reality, and raised their employment almost to the intensity of active life. And now, beginning to help his schoolboy with games, he became absorbed in the pursuit, and developed a *Kriegspiel* of his own, adapted to the conditions under which, of necessity, he played. But his enthusiasm and the thoroughness and ingenuity he exhibited are best described in the account given by his adversary, Mr. Lloyd Osbourne—

"The abiding spirit of the child in him was seldom shown in more lively fashion than during those days

of exile at Davos, where he brought a boy's eagerness, a man's intellect, a novelist's imagination, into the varied business of my holiday hours; the printing-press, the toy-theatre, the tin soldiers, all engaged his attention. Of these, however, the tin soldiers most took his fancy; and the war game was constantly improved and elaborated, until, from a few hours, a 'war' took weeks to play, and the critical operations in the attic monopolised half our thoughts. This attic was a most chilly and dismal spot, reached by a crazy ladder, and unlit save for a single frosted window; so low at the eaves and so dark that we could seldom stand upright, nor see without a candle. Upon the attic floor a map was roughly drawn in chalks of different colours, with mountains, rivers, towns, bridges and roads of two classes. Here we would play by the hour, with tingling fingers and stiffening knees, and an intentness, zest, and excitement that I shall never forget. The mimic battalions marched and counter-marched, changed by measured evolutions from column formation into line, with cavalry screens in front and massed supports behind in the most approved military fashion of to-day. It was war in miniature, even to the making and destruction of bridges, the intrenching of camps; good and bad weather, with corresponding influence on the roads; siege and horse artillery, proportionately slow, as compared to the speed of unimpeded foot, and proportionately expensive in the upkeep; and an exacting commissariat added the last touch of verisimilitude.

The strength of the enemy in any given spot could only be ascertained according to strictly defined reg-

ulations, and an attempt was even made to mark certain districts as unhealthy and to settle by the hazard of the dice-box the losses incurred by all troops passing through them.

During one war Stevenson chronicled the operations in a series of extracts from the *Glendarule Times* and the *Yallobally Record*, until the editor of the latter sheet was hanged by order of General Osbourne and its place supplied by the less offensive *Herald*.

Year after year, he reverted to the game, and even in Samoa there was a campaign room with the map coloured on the floor, although the painful realities of actual warfare, either present or imminent, occupied all our thoughts for the closing period of Stevenson's life.

But, busy as he was this winter, he had time not only for this game, but also, turning aside to help young Osbourne with his printing, he first wrote verses for the toy-press, and then, getting hold of a bit of rough wood, began to design and cut illustrations for his text, or in some cases to create pictures which a text must elucidate.

In February, 1882, he sent to his parents "two woodcuts of my own cutting; they are moral emblems; one represents 'anger,' and the other 'pride scorning poverty.' They will appear among others, accompanied by verses, in my new work published by S. L. Osbourne. If my father does not enjoy these, he is no true man." And to his mother: "Wood-engraving has suddenly drave between me and the sun. I dote on wood-engraving. I'm a made man for life. I've an amusement at last."

Of these blocks about two dozen in all were cut, most of them by Stevenson's own hands, though the elephant, at any rate, was due to his wife, and "the sacred ibis in the distance" was merely the result of an accident turned to advantage. He had in his boyhood received a few lessons in drawing as a polite accomplishment: later he found great difficulty in the mechanical work of his original profession, in which, of course, he had been specially trained. Thus, in 1868, he wrote to his mother, "It is awful how slowly I draw, and how ill." Barbizon seemed to rouse in him no tendency to express himself in line or colour, and it was not till he was alone at Monastier in 1878, that he made for his own pleasure such sketches as any grown man with no technical education might attempt.

In April again the family quitted the Alps, but this year with welcome news. "We now leave Davos for good, I trust, Dr. Ruedi giving me leave to live in France, fifteen miles as the crow flies from the sea, and if possible near a fir wood. This is a great blessing: I hope I am grateful."

They crossed the Channel with little delay; Louis stayed first at Weybridge, and then at Burford Bridge, where he renewed his friendship with George Meredith. By May 20th he was in Edinburgh, and there spent most of June, though he made a week's expedition with his father to Lochearnhead, hard by the Braes of Balquhidder. Here he made inquiries about the Appin murder, perpetrated only forty miles away, and was successful in finding some local traditions about the murderer still extant.

The flow of work at the beginning of the year was followed by a long period of unproductiveness after he returned to this country. He had an article in each number of the *Cornhill* from April to August, but, except the second part of "Talk and Talkers," these had been written at Davos. After this his connection with the magazine came to an end. During the past seven years its readers had grown accustomed to look eagerly every month in hope of finding an article by R. L. S., and all its rivals have, by comparison, ever since seemed conventional and dull.

On June 26th, the family went to the manse of Stobo, in Peeblesshire for the summer. But the weather was bad, the house shut in by trees, and the result most unbeneficial. In a fortnight Louis was ordered away, went to London to consult Dr. Andrew Clark, and in accordance with his advice started on July 22nd for Speyside in the company of Sidney Colvin. The rest of the family soon joined him at Kingussie, and here again by a burn—"the golden burn that pours and sulks," he spent the last entire month he ever passed in Scotland. Having gone to France to write about Edinburgh, in the Highlands he turned again to France, and now wrote most of the *Treasure of Franchard.* The weather again did its worst; he had an invitation to meet Cluny Macpherson, and was eagerly looking forward to a talk about the Highlands. But a hemorrhage intervened, Stevenson had to leave in haste, and by September 9th he was in London, again asking the advice of Dr. Clark. The opinion was so far favourable that

there was no need to return to Davos, which disagreed with Mrs. Stevenson, and of which they were both heartily tired. They were thus at liberty to seek a home in some more congenial spot.

CHAPTER X

THE RIVIERA—1882-84

"Happy (said I), I was only happy once, that was at Hyères; it came to end from a variety of reasons, decline of health, change of place, increase of money, age with his stealing steps; since then, as before then, I know not what it means."—*Letters*, iii. 288.

ACCORDINGLY about the middle of September Stevenson started for the south of France, and, since he was unfit to go alone, and his wife was too ill to undertake the journey, he started in the charge and company of his cousin, R. A. M. Stevenson. Their object was to discover some place suitable for both husband and wife, possessing more of the advantages of a town and fewer of the drawbacks of a health-resort than the Alpine valley from which they were now finally released. Paris was left without delay, and Montpellier was next tried and rejected, but not until Louis had a slight hemorrhage. He wrote to his wife: "I spent a very pleasant afternoon in the doctor's consulting-room among the curious, meridional peasants, who quarrelled and told their complaints. I made myself very popular there, I don't know how."

His companion had to return home, and Louis made his way to Marseilles, where, a few days later, on October 11th, he was joined by his wife.

No time was wasted; within three days a house that seemed all they could desire was found and taken. It was a commodious *maison de campagne* with a large garden, situated about five miles from Marseilles, with such facilities of communication with the city as a considerable suburb ensures. "In a lovely spot, among lovely wooded and cliffy hills—most mountainous in line—far lovelier to my eye than any Alps."

In another week they were installed in Campagne Defli, and had sent for such property as they needed. But whether the house, or the neighbourhood, or the season was unhealthy, St. Marcel proved a most unfortunate choice. Stevenson was never well there, and never for more than three or four days at a time capable of any work. He had several slight hemorrhages and mended very slowly. By Christmas he wrote: "I had to give up wood-engraving, chess, latterly even Patience, and could read almost nothing but newspapers. It was dull but necessary. I seem hopelessly hide-bound, as you see; nothing comes out of me but chips."

At the end of the year an epidemic of fever broke out in St. Marcel, and he found himself so unwell, that in desperation he went to Nice lest he should become too ill to move. They were unprepared for the move, and his wife stayed behind until they could obtain further supplies. In the meantime telegrams and letters went astray, and at the end of a week Mrs. Stevenson arrived at Nice quite distraught. She had received no news whatever of her husband, having telegraphed in all directions for three days in

vain, and had been assured by every one that he must have had a fresh hemorrhage, have left the train at some wayside station, and there died and been buried.

In the meantime all went well, but it was obviously impossible for Stevenson to think of returning to St. Marcel; by the middle of February 1883 they got the Campagne Defli off their hands, and were at liberty to seek a fresh settlement. After a short visit to Marseilles, they went to a hotel at Hyères, and there by the end of March were once more established in a house of their own—Chalet La Solitude. It was situated just above the town, on a slope of the hill on which the castle stands, commanding a view of Lest Oiseaux and the Iles d'Or; a cottage scarce as large as the Davos chalet, "with a garden like a fairy-story and a view like a classical landscape."

Here for a year, or, to be strictly accurate, for a little more than nine months, Stevenson was to find happiness, a greater happiness than ever came to him again, except perhaps at moments in his exile. Hardly anything seemed wanting; his wife was always able to be with him, and he had, besides, the company of his stepson, in which he delighted. There was the affectionate intercourse with his parents, clouded only by the gradual failure in his father's spirits; there was the correspondence with his friends; already in March he had been able to welcome Sidney Colvin as the first of his visitors; and, not least, he found a measure of health once more and a renewed capacity for employing his increased skill.

Of the first of these elements in his happiness he wrote to his mother in 1884: "My wife is in pretty good feather; I love her better than ever and admire her more; and I cannot think what I have done to deserve so good a gift. This sudden remark came out of my pen; it is not like me; but in case you did not know, I may as well tell you, that my marriage has been the most successful in the world. I say so, and being the child of my parents, I can speak with knowledge. She is everything to me; wife, brother, sister, daughter and dear companion; and I would not change to get a goddess or a saint. So far, after four years of matrimony." And of his delight in his surroundings he said in 1883: "This house and garden of ours still seem to go between us and our wits." Their material comfort was further increased in May, when Valentine Roch entered their service, an extremely clever and capable French girl, who remained with them for six years, and even accompanied them on their first cruise in the Pacific.

For a period of nearly eight months he had been unable to earn any money or to finish any work, and it was therefore with the greatest delight that in the beginning of May he received an offer from Messrs. Cassell for the book-rights of *Treasure Island* in advance. "How much do you suppose? I believe it would be an excellent jest to keep the answer till my next letter. For two cents I would do so. Shall I? Anyway, I'll turn the page first. No—well, a hundred pounds, all alive, O! A hundred jingling, tingling, golden, minted quid. Is not this wonderful?"

. . . "It is dreadful to be a great, big man, and not to be able to buy bread."

Already, before he reached La Solitude, his enforced leisure had come to an end. Verse writing with him was almost always a resource of illness or of convalescence, and he now took advantage of his recovery to increase the poems of childhood (for which his first name was *Penny Whistles*), until they amounted to some eight-and-forty numbers. Now, also, in answer to an application from R. W. Gilder, the editor of the *Century Magazine*, *The Silverado Squatters* was finished and despatched to New York, and so began his first important connection with any of the American publishers who were afterwards to prove so lucrative to him. Of course, like others, he had suffered at the hands of persons who had not only appropriated his books without licence, but, even, a less usual outrage, had wantonly misspelt his name. "I saw my name advertised in a number of the *Critic* as the work of one R. L. Stephenson; and, I own, I boiled. It is so easy to know the name of the man whose book you have stolen; for there it is, at full length, on the title-page of your booty. But no, damn him, not he! He calls me Stephenson."

The ground was now clear before him, and on April 10th he set to work once more from the beginning upon *Prince Otto*, which had been begun in California in its present form some three years before. Ten days later he wrote: "I am up to the waist in a story; a kind of one volume novel; how do they ever puff them out into three? Lots of things happen in this thing of mine, and one column will swallow it

without a strain." At first all went swimmingly. By May 5th—in five-and-twenty days—he had drafted fifteen chapters. But there was a stumbling-block in his path—he had yet to reckon with his women characters. When he came to the scenes where the intervention of the Countess von Rosen is described, his resources were taxed to their utmost, and when the battle went against him, he renewed his attack again and again. Seven times was the fifteenth chapter rewritten, and it was only the eighth version which finally was suffered to pass.

In June he went for a week to Marseilles, and on July 1st left for Royat. The latter visit was most successful, as his parents joined the party and there spent several weeks, but early in September Louis and his wife were back at La Solitude. *Treasure Island* had been prepared for press, and was already in the hands of the printers with the sole exception of the chart out of which the story had grown. This, having been accidentally mislaid, had now to be reconstructed from the text, and was being drawn in the Stevensons' office in Edinburgh.

On September 19th Stevenson heard of the death of his old friend Walter Ferrier, who had long been in bad health, but was not supposed to be in any immediate danger. The record of their friendship is contained in the essay called 'Old Mortality,' which was written this winter; part of the letter has already been quoted which Stevenson wrote to Henley at this time upon hearing of their common loss, a letter which is, moreover, given at length in Sir Sidney Colvin's collection. Hence there is no occasion to say more

here than that this was the first breach death had made in the inner circle of Stevenson's friends.

That very spring he had written in a letter of consolation, "I am like a blind man in speaking of these things, for I have never known what mourning is, and the state of my health permits me to hope that I shall carry this good fortune unbroken to the grave." The hope was not to be fulfilled, but never again, with the exception of his father and of Fleeming Jenkin, did any loss so nearly affect him as the death of Walter Ferrier.

All through the autumn his house continued to afford him fresh satisfaction. "My address is still the same," he writes to Will Low, "and I live in a most sweet corner of the universe, sea and fine hills before me, and a rich variegated plain; and at my back a craggy hill, loaded with vast feudal ruins. I am very quiet; a person passing by my door half startles me; but I enjoy the most aromatic airs, and at night the most wonderful view into a moonlit garden. By day this garden fades into nothing, overpowered by its surroundings and the luminous distance; but at night, and when the moon is out, that garden, the arbour, the flight of stairs that mount the artificial hillock, the plumed blue gum-trees that hang trembling, become the very skirts of Paradise. Angels I know frequent it; and it thrills all night with the flutes of silence."

Treasure Island was published as a book in the end of November, when Stevenson obtained his first popular success. Its reception reads like a fairy-tale. Statesmen and judges and all sorts of staid and sober

men became boys once more, sitting up long after bedtime to read their new book. The story goes that Mr. Gladstone got a glimpse of it at Lord Rosebery's house, and spent the next day hunting over London for a second-hand copy. The editor of the *Saturday Review*, the superior, cynical "Saturday" of old days, wrote excitedly to say that he thought *Treasure Island* was the best book that had appeared since *Robinson Crusoe*; and James Payn, who, if not a great novelist himself, yet held an undisputed position among novelists and critics, sent a note hardly less enthusiastic. Mr. Andrew Lang spent over it "several hours of unmingled bliss." "This is the kind of stuff a fellow wants. I don't know, except *Tom Sawyer* and the *Odyssey*, that I ever liked any romance so well." It was translated and pirated in all directions, appearing within a couple of years as a *feuilleton* even in Greek and Spanish papers. For all this, it brought in no great emolument, for during the first year no more than five thousand six hundred copies were sold in this country.

Its author, at all events, did not lose his head or over-estimate his merits. Writing to his parents he says: "This gives one strange thoughts of how very bad the common run of books must be; and generally all the books that the wiseacres think too bad to print are the very ones that bring me praise and pudding."

One link with the past had snapped, one friendship had vanished, and Stevenson was looking forward all the more eagerly to seeing two of his oldest friends, Henley and Charles Baxter, who were coming out to spend a long-promised holiday with him. The New

Year came, his friends arrived at Hyères, and for about a week he enjoyed the delights to which he had looked forward. But the house was too small for their reception, and Stevenson proposed that they should all go away together to some other place, that he might share with them the benefit of a change. Accordingly the party of four went to Nice, and there almost at once Stevenson took cold. At first it seemed slight, and his friends who were due to return home went away without thought of anxiety. The cold, however, resulted in congestion of the lungs, and suddenly the situation became grave. "At a consultation of doctors," Mrs. Stevenson says, "I was told there was no hope, and I had better send for some member of the family to be with me at the end. Bob Stevenson came, and I can never be grateful enough for what he did for me then. He helped me to nurse Louis, and he kept me from despair as I believe no one else could have done; he inspired me with hope when there seemed no hope."

Very slowly he grew better; it was some time before he was out of danger, and a month before he was able to set foot outside the house; but at last they returned to La Solitude.

The illness, however, marked the beginning of a new and proctracted period of ill-health, which lasted with but little intermission until he had left Europe.

Miss Ferrier, his friend's sister, came out at this time and stayed with them until their return to England, proving an unfailing support to them in their increasing troubles. For in the first week in May Stevenson was attacked with the most violent and

dangerous hemorrhage he ever experienced. It occurred late at night, but in a moment his wife was by his side. Being choked with the flow of blood and unable to speak, he made signs to her for a paper and pencil, and wrote in a neat firm hand, "Don't be frightened; if this is death, it is an easy one." Mrs. Stevenson had always a small bottle of ergotin and a minim glass in readiness; these she brought in order to administer the prescribed quantity. Seeing her alarm, he took the bottle and glass away from her, measured the dose correctly with a perfectly steady hand, and gave the things back to her with a reassuring smile.

Recovery was very slow and attended by numerous complications, less dangerous, but ever more painful than the original malady. The dust of street refuse gave him Egyptian ophthalmia, and sciatica descending upon him caused him the more pain, as he was suffering already from restlessness. The hemorrhage was not yet healed, and we now hear for the first time of the injunctions to absolute silence, orders patiently obeyed, distasteful as they were. In silence and the dark, and in acute suffering, he was still cheery and undaunted. When the ophthalmia began and the doctor first announced his diagnosis, Mrs. Stevenson felt that it was more than anyone could be expected to bear, and went into another room, and there, in her own phrase, "sat and gloomed." Louis rang his bell and she went to him, saying, in the bitterness of her spirit, as she entered the room, "Well, I suppose that this is the very best thing that could have happened!" "Why, how odd!" wrote Louis on a piece of paper,

"I was just going to say those very words." When darkness fell upon him and silence was imposed, and his right arm was in a sling on account of the hemorrhage, his wife used to amuse him for part of the day by making up tales, some of which they afterwards used in the *Dynamiter*; when these were at an end, he continued the *Child's Garden*, writing down the new verses for himself in the dim light with his left hand.

In a few days Mrs. Stevenson was able to write to her mother-in-law:—

"[18*th May* 1884.]— . . . The doctor says, "Keep him alive till he is forty, and then although a winged bird, he may live to ninety." But between now and forty he must live as though he were walking on eggs, and for the next two years, no matter how well he feels, he must live the life of an invalid. He must be perfectly tranquil, trouble about nothing, have no shocks or surprises, not even pleasant ones; must not eat too much, drink too much, laugh too much; may write a little, but not too much; talk *very* little, and walk no more than can be helped."

His recovery was steady and satisfactory; with great caution and by the aid of a courier the party made their way to Royat without mishap early in June. Thence he made up his mind to return to England in order to obtain a final medical opinion upon his health and prospects. The only course before him apparently was to "live the life of a delicate girl" until he was forty. But uncongenial as this seemed, his spirits were as high as ever, and he signed

the letter with a string of names worthy of Bunyan's own invention—"I am, yours,

Mr. Muddler.
Mr. Addlehead.
Mr. Wandering Butterwits.
Mr. Shiftless Inconsistency.
Sir Indecision Contentment."

The journey was safely accomplished and Stevenson and his wife reached England on the 1st of July, the day before the first representation on the London stage of *Deacon Brodie*.

CHAPTER XI

BOURNEMOUTH—1884–87

"This is the study where a smiling God
Beholds each day my stage of labour trod,
And smiles and praises, and I hear him say:
'The day is brief; be diligent in play.'"

R. L. S.

THE next three years Stevenson was to spend in England—the only time he was ever resident in this country—and then Europe was to see him no more. At first sight the chronicle of this time would seem to be more full of interest than any other period of his life. *Treasure Island*, his "first book," had just been given to the world; the year after his return *A Child's Garden of Verses* and *Prince Otto* were published, and *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Kidnapped* appeared in the following year. To have written almost any one of these brilliant yet widely dissimilar books would be to challenge the attention of the most distinguished contemporary men of letters; and to meet Stevenson at this time was instantly to acknowledge the quality and charm of the man and the strong fascination of his talk. For the whole of the period he made his home at Bournemouth, within easy reach of London visitors; and in London itself Sidney Colvin (who had now become Keeper of Prints at the British Museum) not only had a house always open to him, but delighted to bring together those

who by their own powers were best fitted to appreciate his society.

Yet the reality is disappointing. To produce brilliant writings it is not necessary at the time to live an exciting or even a very full life, and Stevenson's health deprived him more and more of the ordinary incidents which happen to most men in their daily course. Looking back on this period in after days, he cries out: "Remember the pallid brute that lived in Skerryvore like a weevil in a biscuit." Nearly all the time which was not devoted to contending with illness was taken up with his work, and as he rarely left home without returning in a more or less disabled condition, he stayed in his own house and led the most retired of lives. Even there it was no uncommon experience for a visitor who had come to Bournemouth specially to see him, to find himself put to the door, either on the ground of having a cold, to the contagion of which it was unsafe for Stevenson to be exposed, or because his host was already too ill to receive him.

Having passed a few days in a hotel at Richmond, Stevenson and his wife went down to Bournemouth, where Lloyd Osbourne had for some months past been at school. After staying at a hotel, and trying first one and then another set of lodgings on the West Cliff, at the end of October they migrated into a furnished house in Branksome Park. The doctors whom he consulted were equally divided in their opinions, two saying it would be safe for him to stay in this country, while two advised him to go abroad; and in the end he yielded only to the desire to be

near his father, who, though still at work, was evidently failing fast.

Meanwhile the first two months at Bournemouth were spent chiefly in the company of W. E. Henley, and were devoted to collaboration over two new plays. The reception of *Deacon Brodie* had been sufficiently promising to serve as an incentive to write a piece which should be a complete success, and so to grasp some of the rewards which now seemed within reach of the authors. They had never affected to disregard the fact that in this country the prizes of the dramatist are out of all proportion to the payment of the man of letters, and already in 1883 Stevenson had written to his father: "The theatre is the gold mine; and on that I must keep an eye." Now that they were again able to meet, and to be constantly together, the friends embarked upon some of the schemes they had projected long ago, and no doubt had talked over at Nice at the beginning of the year. By October the drafts of *Beau Austin* and *Admiral Guinea* were completed and set up in type; and in the following spring, at the suggestion of (Sir) Beerbohm Tree, the two collaborators again set to work and produced their English version of *Macaire*. These were to have been but the beginning of their labours, but more necessary work intervened, and the plays were never resumed.

Meanwhile, on receiving an application from the proprietor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* for a Christmas story, Stevenson attempted to produce a new tale for the occasion. It proved, however, what, in the slang of the studio, he called a "machine," and "Mark-

heim," which was now ready, being too short, as a last resource he bethought himself of "The Body Snatcher," one of the "tales of horror" written at Pitlochry in 1881, and then "laid aside in a justifiable disgust." It was not one of his greater achievements, and would probably have excited little comment, had it not been for the gruesome and unauthorised methods of advertisement.

By the end of January so successful had the winter been that Thomas Stevenson bought a house at Bournemouth as a present for his daughter-in-law. Its name was forthwith changed to Skerryvore in commemoration of the most beautiful and the most difficult to build of all the lighthouses erected by the family. It was no great distance from where they were already living: a modern brick house, closely covered with ivy; and from the top windows it was possible to catch a glimpse of the sea. There was half an acre of ground very charmingly arranged, running down from the lawn at the back, past a bank of heather, into a chine or small ravine full of rhododendrons, and at the bottom a tiny stream.

Wanderer as he was, and still gave the impression of being, Stevenson entered into his new property with a keenness of delight that must have amused those of his friends who remembered his former disparagement of all household possessions. "Our drawing-room is now a place so beautiful that it's like eating to sit in it. No other room is so lovely in the world; there I sit like an old Irish beggarman's cast-off bauchle in a palace throne-room. Incon-

gruity never went so far; I blush for the figure I cut in such a bower."

The large dovecot is commemorated in *Underwoods*; the garden was an endless pleasure to Mrs. Stevenson, and long having been the domain of "Boguey" in his life-time, became at last his resting-place. Having been sent to hospital to recover from wounds received in battle, he broke loose, in his maimed state attacked another dog more powerful than himself, and so perished. His master and mistress were inconsolable, and never, even in Samoa, could bring themselves to allow any successor.

I have already referred to the easy access to Bournemouth, which was, of course, a prime consideration with his parents. But Stevenson's friends had seen little of him for several years past, so in this also there was a welcome change from Hyères. Nearly all the old and tried companions whom I have mentioned came to Skerryvore during these years: R. A. M. Stevenson and his wife, and his sister, Mrs. de Mattos, and her children; Miss Ferrier, Charles Baxter, Fleeming Jenkin and Mrs. Jenkin, Sidney Colvin, and W. E. Henley all paid more or less frequent visits. Among the new-comers were Mr. Sargent, who twice came to paint his host's portrait; Mr. James Sully, an old friend at the Savile Club; Mr. William Archer, who owed his first coming to his severe but inspiring analysis of Stevenson, and remained as one of the most valued of his critics and appreciative of his friends; and, last and most welcome of the admissions into the inmost circle, his very dear friend, Mr. Henry James.

One of the most frequent visitors was R. A. M. Stevenson, who had, after some time, decided to give up the thankless task of producing pictures for the public which were not those he wanted to paint, and to use his technical knowledge and matchless powers of exposition in the criticism of art. That other art of writing, however, which Louis had spent his life in learning, could not be mastered in a day for the purposes of journalism even by so brilliant a talker as Bob, and it fell to Louis and Henley to give him many hints and put him through an apprenticeship in the technical part of the new profession in which he so rapidly made his mark.

Nor were the residents of Bournemouth to be overlooked, although (besides Dr. Scott, to whom *Underwoods* was chiefly dedicated, and Mrs. Boodle and her daughter, the "Gamekeeper" of the *Letters*) close friendship was confined to two families—Sir Henry Taylor and his wife and daughters, and Sir Percy and Lady Shelley. Sir Percy, the son of the poet, was devoted to yachting and the theatre (especially melodrama), and his genial, kindly nature, in which shrewdness and simplicity were almost attractively blended, endeared him to his new as to all his old friends, while Lady Shelley, no less warm-hearted, took the greatest fancy to Louis, and discovering in him a close likeness to her renowned father-in-law, she forthwith claimed him as her son.

But it was the Taylors with whom he lived in more intimate relations in spite of the impression he seems here again to have produced of a being wholly transitory and detached, a bird of passage resting in his

flight from some strange source to regions yet more unknown. Sir Henry indeed died almost before the friendship had commenced, but Lady Taylor and her daughters continued to live at Bournemouth until long after Skerryvore was transferred to other hands.

But before Sir Henry Taylor passed away, Stevenson had suffered a more unexpected and a heavier blow in the death of his friend Fleeming Jenkin on June 12, 1885. Only once again in his life was he to lose one very near to him, and the subsequent task of writing his friend's life not only raised his great admiration but even deepened the regret for his loss.

To some of his friends in these days, and chiefly to Miss Una Taylor, Mrs. Jenkin, W. E. Henley, and his cousin Bob, he owed the revival of his interest in music, which now laid greater hold upon him than ever before. He began to learn the piano, though he never reached even a moderate degree of skill; he flung himself with the greatest zeal into the mysteries of composition, wherein it is but honest to say that he failed to master the rudiments. "Books are of no use," he says; "they tell you how to write in four parts, and that cannot be done by man. Or do you know a book that really tells a fellow? I suppose people are expected to have ears. To my ear a fourth is delicious, and consecutive fifths the music of the spheres. As for hidden fifths, those who pretend to dislike 'em I can never acquit of affectation. Besides (this in your ear) there is nothing else in music; I know; I have tried to write four parts."

His delight and eagerness were enhanced rather than decreased by difficulties, and in a period of his

life when nearly all pleasures were taken away from him, he was able at least to sit at the piano and create for the ear of his imagination those heavenly joys it is the prerogative of music to bestow.

Besides enjoying the company of his friends, he made good use of his few other opportunities. Since at Bournemouth his health hardly ever allowed him to pass beyond the gate of Skerryvore, the chance seldom presented itself to him of meeting men of any other class whose lives lay outside his own, but those who fell in his way received unusual attention at his hands, more especially if they possessed originality or any independence of character. Thus, the barber that came to cut his hair, the picture-framer, the "vet" who attended "Boguey," each in their different way were originals to a man whose life was so secluded; their coming was welcomed, they invariably stayed to meals, and, sooner or later, told the story of their lives.

Such was his own life, and such were his surroundings at this period; and yet to leave the picture without a word of warning would be wholly to misrepresent Stevenson. A popular novelist, toiling incessantly at his writing, and confined by ill-health almost entirely within the walls of a suburban villa at an English watering-place, is about as dreary a figure as could be formed from the facts. The details are as accurate as if they were in a realistic novel, and yet the essence is wholly untrue to life. It is necessary to insist again and again on the "spirit intense and rare," the courage, the vivacity, the restless intellect ever forming new schemes with un-

ceasing profusion. There are people who might live a life of the wildest adventure, of the most picturesque diversity, and yet be dull. Stevenson could lie in a sickroom for weeks without speaking, and yet declare truly, as he asserted to W. Archer, "I never was bored in my life." When everything else failed, and he was entirely incapable of work, he would build card-houses, or lie in bed modelling small figures of wax or clay, taking the keenest interest in either process. On being told that a friend of his "has fallen in love with stagnation," from his invalid chair he protests that the dream of his life is to be "the leader of a great horde of irregular cavalry," and his favourite attitude "turning in the saddle to look back at my whole command (some five thousand strong) following me at the hand-gallop up the road out of the burning valley by moonlight." In him at least the romantic daydream called out as completely the splendid virtues of courage and enterprise and resolution as he could ever have displayed them on the field of battle.

In March 1885 *A Child's Garden of Verses* was published at last, after having been set up twice in proof. In April *Prince Otto* began to run in *Longman's Magazine*, coming out as a book in October, and by May *More New Arabian Nights* appeared. Soon after the issue of *Prince Otto*, Stevenson wrote to Henley: "I had yesterday a letter from George Meredith, which was one of the events of my life. He cottoned (for one thing), though with differences, to Otto; cottoned more than my rosiest visions had inspired me to hope; said things that (from him) I

would blush to quote." The Meredith letter unfortunately has disappeared, but in another from the same source there occur these words: "I have read pieces of *Prince Otto*, admiring the royal manner of your cutting away of the novelist's lumber. Straight to matter is the secret. Also approvingly your article on style."

Still, with all this production, and with praise from so high a quarter, it must not be supposed that Stevenson's writing as yet brought in any very extravagant payment. His professional income for this year, in fact, was exactly the same as that which he had averaged for the three years preceding, and amounted to less than four hundred pounds. Nor were his receipts materially increased before he reached America.

A subject much in his thoughts at this time was the duality of man's nature and the alternation of good and evil; and he was for a long while casting about for a story to embody this central idea. Out of this frame of mind had come the sombre imagination of "Markheim," but that was not what he required. The true tale still delayed, till suddenly one night he had a dream. He awoke, and found himself in possession of two, or rather three, of the scenes in the *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.*

Its waking existence, however, was by no means without incident. He dreamed these scenes in considerable detail, including the circumstances of the transforming powders, and so vivid was the impression that he wrote the story off at a red heat, just as it had presented itself to him in his sleep.

He then came downstairs in a fever, read nearly half the book aloud, "and then while we were gaping, he was away again and busy writing." Mrs. Stevenson, however, wrote a detailed criticism of the story as it then stood, pointing out her chief objection—that it was really an allegory, whereas he had treated it purely as if it were a story. In the first draft Jekyll's nature was bad all through, and the Hyde change was worked only for the sake of a disguise. She took the paper to her husband and left his room. After a while his bell rang; on her return she found him sitting up in bed (the clinical thermometer in his mouth), pointing with a long denunciatory finger to a pile of ashes. He had burned the entire draft. Having realised that he had taken the wrong point of view, that the tale was an allegory and not another "Markheim," he at once destroyed his manuscript, acting not out of pique, but from a fear that he might be tempted to make too much use of it, and not rewrite the whole from a new standpoint.

It was written again in three days ("I drive on with Jekyll: bankruptcy at my heels"); but the fear of losing the story altogether prevented much further criticism. The powder was condemned as too material an agency, but this he could not eliminate, because in the dream it had made so strong an impression upon him.

"The mere physical feat," Mr. Osbourne continues, "was tremendous; and instead of harming him, it roused and cheered him inexpressibly." Of

course it must not be supposed that these three days represent all the time that Stevenson spent upon the story, for after this he was working hard for a month or six weeks in bringing it into its present form.

The manuscript was then offered to Messrs. Longmans for their magazine; and on their judgment the decision was taken not to break it up into monthly sections, but to issue it as a shilling book in paper covers. "The little book was printed," said Mr. Charles Longman, "but when it was ready the bookstalls were already full of Christmas numbers, etc., and the trade would not look at it. We therefore withdrew it till after Christmas. In January it was launched—not without difficulty. The trade did not feel inclined to take it up, till a review appeared in the *Times* calling attention to the story. This gave it a start, and in the next six months close on forty thousand copies were sold in this country alone." Besides the authorised edition in America, the book was widely pirated.

Its success was probably due rather to the moral instincts of the public than to any conscious perception of the merits of its art. It was read by those who never read fiction, it was quoted in pulpits, and made the subject of leading articles in religious newspapers. But as literature also it was justly received with enthusiasm. Even Symonds, though he doubted "whether anyone had the right so to scrutinise the abysmal depths of personality," admitted, "The art is burning and intense"; and the cry of horror and pain which he raised was in another sense a tribute to its success. "How had you the *ilia dura ferro et*

ære triplici duriora to write Dr. Jekyll? I know now what was meant when you were called a sprite."

In his *Chapter on Dreams*, Stevenson has told his readers how the "brownies" suddenly became useful in providing him with stories for his books, but in spite of this statement it appears that besides *Jekyll and Hyde* there is only one other plot thus furnished which he ever actually completed. This was "Olalla," which appeared in the Christmas number of the *Court and Society Review*; To Lady Taylor he wrote: "The trouble with 'Olalla' is, that it somehow sounds false. . . . The odd problem is: What makes a story true? 'Markheim' is true; 'Olalla' false; and I don't know why, nor did I feel it while I worked at them; indeed I had more inspiration with 'Olalla,' as the style shows. I am glad you thought that young Spanish woman well dressed; I admire the style of it myself, more than is perhaps good for me; it is so solidly written. And that again brings back (almost with the voice of despair) my unanswerable: Why is it false?"

Kidnapped was begun in March 1885 as another story for boys, and with as little premeditation as afterwards sufficed for its sequel. But when once the hero had been started upon his voyage, the tale was laid aside and not resumed until the following January, just after the publication of *Jekyll and Hyde.*

"In one of my books, and in one only, the characters took the bit in their teeth; all at once, they became detached from the flat paper, they turned their backs on me and walked off bodily; and from that

time my task was stenographic—it was they who spoke, it was they who wrote the remainder of the story."

But within two months Stevenson began to flag, and not long after a visit for his father's sake to Matlock, where he had made small progress with the writing, he decided, at his friend Colvin's suggestion, to break off with David's return to Edinburgh and leave the tale half told. Mr. Henderson gladly accepted the story for *Young Folks*, where it ran under Stevenson's own name from May to July, and was then published by Messrs. Cassell & Co.

The whole took him, as he said, "probably five months' actual working; one of these months entirely over the last chapters, which had to be put together without interest or inspiration, almost word for word, for I was entirely worked out." But as a whole, the author thought it the best and most human work he had yet done, and its success was immediate with all readers. To mention two instances only:—Matthew Arnold, who apparently knew Stevenson's work little, if at all, before this was at once filled with delight, and we are told that it was the last book Lord Iddesleigh was able to read with pleasure—"a volume," adds Mr. Lang, "containing more of the spirit of Scott than any other in English fiction."

The elder Stevenson had for several years, as we have seen, been declining in health and spirits, and the shadows began to close about his path. In 1885 he gradually reduced the amount of his work, though he still continued his practice, and could not alto-

gether refuse the solicitations, he received to appear as a scientific witness before Parliamentary Committees.

The tenderness of the relation between father and son now became pathetic in the extreme. As the old man's powers began to fail, he would speak to Louis as though he were still a child. When they went to the theatre together, and Louis stood up in his place, the father put his arm round him, saying: "Take care, my dearie, you might fall." At night as he kissed his son, he would say reassuringly: "You'll see me in the morning, dearie." "It was," says his daughter-in-law, "just like a mother with a young child."

It was chiefly in the summers and autumns that Louis left Bournemouth, but even then he rarely travelled any distance or was absent for any length of time. In 1885 he went to London in June, and then accompanied his wife on a last visit to Cambridge to stay with Sidney Colvin, who was now resigning his professorship. In August he started for Dartmoor, but after meeting Mr. Thomas Hardy and his wife at Dorchester, was laid up with a violent hemorrhage at Exeter, in the hotel, and was compelled to remain there for several weeks, before he was able to return home. In the following year he went to town in June, and again in August, the latter time extending his journey to Paris, in the company of his wife and W. E. Henley, to see their friends Will H. Low and his wife, then, after a long interval, revisiting France for the first time.

Meeting once more in their early haunts, the old friends revived many memories. One trivial reminis-

cence of this occasion is yet so characteristic of Stevenson, and so illustrates the working of his mind, that it may find a place here. The two friends, painter and writer, both possessing a fine palate for certain wines, had always laughed at one another's pretensions to such taste. In 1875 or 1876, soon after Mr. Low's marriage, he and his wife had gone to dine with Stevenson at the Café of the Musée de Cluny in the Boulevard St. Michel. Mr. Low hesitating for a moment in his choice of a wine, Stevenson turned to Mrs. Low, and on the spot made up and elaborately embellished a story of how her husband had once gone with him to dine at a restaurant, and had tasted and rejected every vintage the establishment was able to offer. At last—so the tale ran—the proprietor confessed that there was one bottle even finer in his cellar, which had lain there forty years, but that he was ready to give it up to such a master, although it was like surrendering a part of his life. A procession was formed, first the proprietor, then the cellarman, then the waiters of the establishment, and they all went down to the cellar to get the famous bottle. Back they came in the same order with the priceless treasure borne tenderly in the arms of the cellarman, a man with a long beard down to his waist, who had been so much in the cellar that the light made him blink. Slowly and reverently they approached the table, and then they all sighed. The bottle was deliberately and ceremoniously uncorked, and the wine poured into small glasses, while the waiters looked on with breathless reverence. The two connoisseurs touched glasses

and slowly carried them to their lips. There was absolute silence. All eyes were upon them, and when they drank deeply and expressed their satisfaction, the whole establishment heaved a sigh of relief.

Mrs. Low now reminded Stevenson of this story, and he, declaring it was no "story," but an historical account of what had actually happened, repeated it word for word as he had originally told it. When he came to the end, he added, "And the cellarman, overcome with emotion, dropped dead." As he said these words, he saw by his hearers' faces that this was a divergence from the original tale, and added quickly, "That about the cellarman is not *really* true!"

The visit to Paris was most successful, its chief event being a visit to Rodin, the sculptor, to whom Stevenson was introduced by Henley. He came home in what was for him exceptionally good health; but returning in October to The Monument—his invariable name for Sidney Colvin's house at the British Museum—he did not escape so easily. The second holiday began delightfully, for it was on this occasion that he met some of the most distinguished of his elders in the world of letters and of art especially, as Sir Sidney Colvin records, Browning, Lowell and Burne-Jones. But soon the visitor was taken ill, confined to bed, and unable to return home until the very end of November, when a succession of fogs made the danger of remaining in London greater than the risk of any journey.

By this time he had begun to write the *Memoir* of his friend Jenkin, the only biography which he ever

actually carried to an end. A few months later Mrs. Jenkin came to Skerryvore to afford him what assistance he needed, and of his method of dealing with the work, she has given a description.

"I used to go to his room after tea, and tell him all I could remember of certain times and circumstances. He would listen intently, every now and then checking me while he made a short note, or asking me to repeat or amplify what I had said, if it had not been quite clear. Next morning I went to him again, and he read aloud to me what he had written—my two hours of talk compressed into a page, and yet, as it seemed to me, all there, all expressed. He would make me note what he had written word by word, asking me, 'Does this express quite exactly what you mean?' Sometimes he offered me alternative words, 'Does this express it more truly?' If I objected to any sentence as not conveying my meaning, he would alter it again and again—unwearied in taking pains."

His life in England led him to take, both in home and in foreign politics, a closer interest than he had felt before. He was deeply moved during these years by two events, though neither in the end led to any action on his part, nor even an open declaration of his views. These were the death of Gordon and a case of boycotting women in Ireland.

In 1884, he had felt acutely the withdrawal of the garrisons from the Soudan. "When I read at Nice that Graham was recalled from Suakim after all that butchery, I died to politics. I saw that they did not regard what I regarded, and regarded what I de-

spised; and I closed my account. If ever I could do anything, I suppose I ought to do it; but till that hour comes, I will not vex my soul."

This was no passing wave of sentiment; Gordon's fate was laid even more deeply to heart, and one of the motives which induced Stevenson to begin his letters to the *Times* upon Samoan affairs, was the memory that in 1884, he had stood by in silence while a brave man was being deserted and a population, dependent for help on the government of this country, was handed over to the mercies of barbarism. So when he finally came to the point of writing a letter to Mr. Gladstone about the Iron Duke, he could think of no other signature open to him than "Your fellow-criminal in the eyes of God," and forbore.

But although the passionate indignation and "that chastity of honour which felt a stain like a wound" were highly characteristic of Stevenson, at the most they could have led to nothing more than a series of letters to the papers. They might have stirred the public conscience, but though Stevenson would have been dealing with matters less remote from the knowledge of his readers, his part in any agitation or protest would not have differed greatly from his efforts in the cause of Samoa. The other project, on the contrary, would, if he had been able to carry it out, have led to a definite and entire change of the whole course of his life. On Nov. 13, 1885, Mr. John Curtin had been murdered by a party of moonlighters in his house, Castle Farm, at Castle Island, County Kerry. His grown-up sons and daughters had shown the greatest courage, and one of the mur-

derers had been shot. For this, the family were cut off as far as possible from all the necessaries of life, and in April, 1887, the boycott still continued. Stevenson, while admitting the wrongs of Ireland, had always the most profound regard for the paramount claims of the law, and had long been shocked, both by the disregard of it in Ireland, and by the callous indifference of the English to the needs of those engaged in its support. He now pitched upon the case of the Curtin family, as a concrete instance in which it behoved England to do her duty, and since no one else was forthcoming for the task, he prepared to offer himself as an agent, and, if need were, a martyr in the cause. As a man of letters he was not tied down to any one place to do his work, so he proposed to take the Curtins' farm and there live with his wife and his stepson. His wife added her protests to those of all his friends who heard of the project, but in vain, and so without sharing his illusions she cheerfully prepared to accompany him.

It is impossible to conceive a more quixotic design. Many of the objections to it Stevenson realised himself, or was told by his friends. But perhaps he never suspected how little he understood the Irish, or how utterly futile his action would have proved. It was, in the end, however, nothing but his father's illness which kept him for the time in this country. He abandoned the design with reluctance, and, as Sir Sidney Colvin says, "to the last he was never well satisfied that he had done right in giving way."

It was driven from his mind, however, by events which touched him more nearly. In the autumn his

parents had taken a house in Bournemouth for the winter, that Mr. Stevenson might have the companionship of his son. In February the father was taken by his wife to Torquay, but came back to Bournemouth on the first of April. By the twenty-first he was so ill that it was thought better to bring him home, and he returned to Edinburgh. The accounts of him grew so alarming, that Louis followed on the sixth of May, but was too late for his coming to be of any use, and on the eighth all was over.

Of the son's affection, and of his appreciation for his father, enough has been said to show how great the sense of his loss must have been. The shock of having found his father no longer able to recognise him preyed upon his mind, and for some time to come he was haunted day and night with "ugly images of sickness, decline, and impaired reason," which increased yet further his sadness and the physical depression that weighed him down.

In the meantime he took cold, was not allowed to attend the funeral, and never left the house until, at the end of May, he was able to return to Bournemouth, and quitted Scotland for the last time.

CHAPTER XII

THE UNITED STATES—1887–88

"But, indeed, I think we all belong to many countries. I am a Scotchman, touch me and you will find the thistle; I am a Briton, and live and move and have my being in the greatness of our national achievements; but am I to forget the long hospitality of that beautiful and kind country, France? Or has not America done me favours to confound my gratitude? Nay, they are all my relatives; I love them all dearly; and should they fall out among themselves (which God in his mercy forbid!), I believe I should be driven mad with their conflicting claims upon my heart."

R. L. S., MS. of *The Silverado Squatters*.

THE chief link which bound Stevenson to this country was now broken, for his mother was free to follow him and his wife to whatever climate the advice of the doctors might send him. Year after year the struggle with ill-health was becoming more painful; "an enemy who was exciting at first, but has now, by the iteration of his strokes, become merely annoying and inexpressibly irksome." He seemed condemned to a life in the sickroom, and even there, to be steadily losing ground. Under the altered circumstances, his uncle, Dr. George Balfour, peremptorily insisted on a complete change of climate for a year, suggesting a trial of either one of the Indian hill-stations or Colorado; this advice was reinforced by his Bournemouth physician, Dr. Scott, and, for several obvious reasons, America was

preferred. As soon as his mother's promise to accompany the party was obtained, Skerryvore was let, and by the middle of July their tickets were taken for New York.

Early in the same month he had written to his mother: ". . . I can let you have a cheque for £100 to-morrow, which is certainly a pleasant thing to be able to say. I wish it had happened while my father was still here; I should have liked to help him once—perhaps even from a mean reason; that he might see I had not been wrong in taking to letters. But all this, I dare say, he observes, or, in some other way, feels. And he, at least, is out of his warfare, as I could sometimes wish I were out of mine. The mind of the survivor is mean; it sees the loss, it does not always feel the deliverance. Yet, about our loss, I feel it more than I can say—every day more—that it is a happy thing that he is now at peace."

But the invalid was not to escape from England without another illness; worn as he was by his recent experiences, he once more broke down, and was laid up again with hemorrhage.

On the 20th August, however, he left Bournemouth for London, and spent Sunday in the City, at Armfield's Hotel. Here, those of his closest friends who at that season were within reach came to bid him farewell, a last good-bye as it proved for all, since he never saw any one of them again. "In one way or another," he had written, "life forces men apart and breaks up the goodly fellowships for ever," and he himself was now to become "no more than a name,

a reminiscence, and an occasional crossed letter very laborious to read."

As Sidney Colvin had been the first to welcome him on his return from America, so he was the last to take leave of him the next day, when the party of five —for Valentine Roch accompanied them—embarked on the steamship *Ludgate Hill*.

The beginning of their voyage was an unpleasant surprise, for their passages had been taken in ignorance that the ship was used as a cattle-boat, and it was only when the family came on board that they learned that they were going to put in at Havre for their cargo before sailing for America. But Stevenson, ill as he was, did not allow mere discomfort to affect him. His mother's diary contains an entry highly characteristic both of herself and of her son: "We discover that it is a cattle-ship, and that we are going to Havre to take in horses. We agree to look upon it as an adventure and make the best of it. . . . It is very amusing and like a circus to see the horses come on board." Not only was there a shipload of horses, but the vessel resembled the fleet of Ophir at least in this, that she carried a consignment of apes; of which "the big monkey, Jacko, scoured about the ship," and took a special fancy to Stevenson. The other passengers were not unentertaining, and the voyage itself was to him a pure delight, until they came to the Banks off Newfoundland, where he again caught cold. "I was so happy on board that ship," he wrote to his cousin Bob; "I could not have believed it possible. We had the beastliest weather, and many discomforts; but the mere fact of its being

a tramp-ship gave us many comforts; we could cut about with the men and officers, stay in the wheel-house, discuss all manner of things, and really be a little at sea. And truly there is nothing else. I had literally forgotten what happiness was, and the full mind—full of external and physical things, not full of cares and labours and rot about a fellow's behaviour. My heart literally sang; I truly care for nothing so much as for that."

By this time his reputation had crossed the Atlantic, and, chiefly by means of *Jekyll and Hyde*, had spread there to an extent which he had probably not yet realised. The first indication reached him, however, before he had sighted the coast-line of the States, for, on September 6th, when the pilot came on board, it turned out that he was known on his boat as Hyde, while his better-tempered partner was called Jekyll.

The next day the *Ludgate Hill* arrived at New York, where Stevenson was met by a crowd of reporters, and—what was more to his taste—by his old friend, Mr. Will H. Low. He was forthwith carried off to an hotel where Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fairchild had made all arrangements for his reception, and the next day he proceeded to their house at Newport. But on the journey he caught fresh cold, and spent a fortnight there chiefly in bed.

On his return to New York he saw a few people, mostly old friends like Mr. Low and his wife, and first made the personal acquaintance of Mr. Charles Scribner and Mr. E. L. Burlingame. Augustus St. Gaudens, the eminent American sculptor, now began to make the necessary studies for the large medallion,

which was not completed until five years later. It is the most satisfactory of all the portraits of Stevenson, and has been reproduced with one or two slight modifications for the memorial in St. Giles' Cathedral. The artist was a great admirer of Stevenson's writings, and had said that if he ever had the chance he would gladly go a thousand miles for the sake of a sitting. The opportunity came to his doors; he now modelled the head and shoulders from life, and in the following spring made casts as well as drawings of the hands.

Stevenson now first realised the advantages of his growing reputation, as shown in the profitable terms which the American papers and magazines offered him for almost any new work. In February, 1883, he had written to his mother: "My six books (since 1878) have brought me in upwards of £600, about £400 of which came from magazines." But now he refused offers of £2000 for a weekly article throughout one year, and of £1600 for the serial rights of his next story, though accepting £700 for a series of twelve articles in *Scribner's Magazine*. In England also he had reached the turning-point of his fortunes. Such of his stories, essays and verses as had yet appeared only in magazines, were in 1887 collected and republished with additions, while in the next year he was elected to the Athenæum Club as one of the nine persons chosen annually by the club for "distinguished eminence."

His first need, however, for the present, was to select a climate where he could best pass the winter. He had come to America in search of health, and was now advised to go to a place in the Adirondack

Mountains, close to the Canadian border. There, a sanatorium for consumptive patients had recently been established near the shores of Saranac Lake.

Thither went accordingly Mrs. Louis Stevenson and her son, and there they succeeded in finding a house which would serve as winter-quarters for the family. Stevenson arrived with his mother on October 3rd, and here he remained until the middle of the following April. It was no very pleasant spot, at all events in the winter months, and formed a curious contrast to his experience in the tropics. The climate comprised every variety of unpleasantness: it rained, it snowed, it sleeted, it blew, it was thick fog; it froze—the cold was Arctic; it thawed—the discomfort was worse; and it combined these different phases in every possible way. Two things only could be advanced in its favour, the first and vital fact that Stevenson's health did not suffer, but actually improved; and secondly, it served at times to remind him of Scotland—a Scotland "without peat and without heather," but that is no very hard task with the true Scot, as may be seen with Stevenson himself in the Pacific.

The place was still somewhat undeveloped; the railway was opened to Saranac itself only during the course of the winter. In Dr. Trudeau, the physician, Stevenson found an agreeable companion, and he also enjoyed the society of some of the resident patients, though he went but little beyond the limits of his own family. They occupied a house belonging to a guide, a frame-house of the usual kind with a verandah; here, with the services of Valen-

tine and a cook, and a boy to chop wood and draw water, they made themselves as comfortable as possible during the winter.

The younger Mrs. Stevenson began the campaign by a hasty visit to Canada to lay in a supply of furs for the family, and her foresight was well rewarded. In December the cold began, and by January the thermometer was sometimes nearly 30 degrees below zero. There was a stove in each chamber, and an open fireplace for logs in the central living-room, but these were of little avail. "Fires do not radiate," wrote Stevenson; "you burn your hands all the time on what seem to be cold stones." His mother gives an illustration: "Cold venison was crunching with ice after being an hour in the oven, and I saw a large lump of ice still unmelted in a pot where water was steaming all round it."

Stevenson himself stood the cold better than any of his family, and, arrayed in a buffalo coat, astrakhan cap, and Indian boots, used to go out daily. He would take short walks on a hill behind the house, and skated on the lake when the ice could be kept clear. But both the ladies were ordered away for their health at different times, while in February the maid was laid up with a severe attack of influenza, the next victim being Stevenson himself.

In the meantime he had not been idle. By December he had written four of the essays for the magazine, and was already on the threshold of a new Scotch story.

"I was walking one night in the verandah of a small house in which I lived, outside the hamlet of Saranac. It was winter; the night was very dark;

the air extraordinarily clear and cold, and sweet with the purity of forests. From a good way below, the river was to be heard contending with ice and boulders: a few lights appeared, scattered unevenly among the darkness, but so far away as not to lessen the sense of isolation. For the making of a story, here were fine conditions. . . . There cropped up in my memory a singular case of a buried and resuscitated fakir, of which I had often been told by an uncle of mine, then lately dead, Inspector-General John Balfour. On such a fine frosty night, with no wind and the thermometer below zero, the brain works with much vivacity; and the next moment I had seen the circumstance transplanted from India and the tropics to the Adirondack wilderness and the stringent cold of the Canadian border. . . . If the idea was to be of any use at all for me, I had to create a kind of evil genius to his friends and family, take him through many disappearances, and make this final restoration from the pit of death, in the icy American wilderness, the last and grimmest of the series. I need not tell my brothers of the craft that I was now in the most interesting moment of an author's life; the hours that followed that night upon the balcony, and the following nights and days, whether walking abroad or lying wakeful in my bed, were hours of unadulterated joy.

"And while I was groping for the fable and the character required, behold I found them lying ready and nine years old in my memory. . . . Here, thinking of quite other things, I had stumbled on the solution, or perhaps I should rather say (in stagewright

phrase) the Curtain or final Tableau of a story conceived long before on the moors between Pitlochry and Strathairdle, conceived in Highland rain, in the blend of the smell of heather and bog-plants, and with a mind full of the Athole correspondence and the Memoirs of the Chevalier de Johnstone. So long ago, so far away it was, that I had first evoked the faces and the mutual tragic situation of the men of Durrisdeer."

At Saranac Mr. Osbourne wrote entirely on his own account a story called at first *The Finsbury Tontine* and afterwards *The Game of Bluff*, which, after the lapse of many months, and a course of collaboration with his stepfather, was to appear as *The Wrong Box*. At first this was an independent book, but as soon as the idea of collaboration had occurred to them, several projects were speedily set on foot, since the joint books would have this advantage, that Mr. Osbourne, being an American citizen, they could be copyrighted in the United States.

Of their methods Mr. Osbourne writes: "When an idea for a book was started, we used to talk it over together, and generally carried the tale on from one invention to another, until, in accordance with Louis' own practice, we had drawn out a complete list of the chapters. In all our collaborations I always wrote the first draft, to break the ground, and it is a pleasure to me to recall how pleased Louis was, for instance, with the first three chapters of *The Ebb Tide*. As a rule, he was a man chary of praise, but he fairly overflowed toward those early chapters, and I shall never forget the elation his praise gave

me. The first draft was then written again and re-written by Louis and myself in turn. It was then worked over and over by each of us, as often as was necessary. For instance, the chapter at Honolulu where Dodd goes out to the lighthouse must have been written and re-written eleven times. Naturally it came about that it was the bad chapters that took the most re-writing. After this how can anybody but Louis or myself pretend to know which of us wrote any given passage? The Paris parts of *The Wrecker* and the end of *The Ebb Tide* (as it stands) I never even touched. (*Letters*, iii. 208.) The collaboration was a mistake, for me, nearly as much as for him; but I don't believe Louis ever enjoyed any work more. He liked the comradeship—my work coming in just as his energy flagged, or *vice versa;* and he liked my applause when he—as he always did—pulled us magnificently out of sloughs. In a way, I was well fitted to help him. I had a knack for dialogue—I mean, of the note-taking kind. I was a kodaker: he, an artist and a man of genius. I managed the petty makeshifts and inventions which were constantly necessary; I was the practical man, so to speak, the one who paced the distances, and used the weights and measures; in *The Wrecker*, the storm was mine; so were the fight and the murders on the *Currency Lass;* the picnics in San Francisco, and the commercial details of Loudon's partnership. Nares was mine and Pinkerton to a great degree, and Captain Brown was mine throughout. But although the first four chapters of *The Ebb Tide* remain, save for the text of Herrick's letter to his sweetheart, almost

as I first wrote them, yet *The Wrong Box* was more mine as a whole than either of the others. It was written and then re-written before there was any thought of collaboration, and was actually finished and ready for the press. There was, in consequence, far less give and take between us in this book than in the others. Louis had to follow the text very closely, being unable to break away without jeopardising the succeeding chapters. He breathed into it, of course, his own incomparable power, humour, and vivacity, and forced the thing to live as it had never lived before; but, even in his transforming hands, it still retains (it seems to me) a sense of failure; and this verdict has so far been sustained by the public's reluctance to buy the book."

But, already, in the heart of the mountains, Stevenson had been laying plans of travel, which were to lead him far and wide across the seas, and to end in a continued exile of which at this time he had never dreamed. He had always nourished a passion for the sea, whether in romance or in real life; it ran in his blood, and came to him from both his father and his grandfather. As a boy, on Saturday afternoons, he would make a party to go down to Leith to see the ships, for in those days, as always, he loved a ship "as a man loves Burgundy or daybreak." The sea was to him the redeeming feature of engineering, and a year or two after he had given up the profession, he wrote with eager anticipation of a projected trip in the *Pharos*, the lighthouse steamer. Then for ten years he hardly mentioned the sea again, and even in crossing the Atlantic as an amateur emi-

grant, he seems to have taken more interest in his fellow-passengers than in the ocean. But his feelings were unchanged: in 1883 his idea of a fortune is to "end with horses and yachts and all the fun of the fair"; and in some verses written at Hyères, contrasting his wife's aspirations with his own, he declares—

> "She vows in ardour for a horse to trot,
> I stake my votive prayers upon a yacht."

We have seen how he enjoyed his voyage across the Atlantic; and to this pleasure he was perpetually recurring: "I have been made a lot of here, . . . but I could give it all up, and agree that —— was the author of my works, for a good seventy-ton schooner and the coins to keep her on. And to think there are parties with yachts who would make the exchange! I know a little about fame now; it is no good compared to a yacht; and anyway there is more fame in a yacht, more genuine fame."

It was, therefore, no unexpected development, no outbreak of any new taste, when it became a favourite diversion of the winter nights at Saranac to plan a yachting cruise. So far, indeed, were the discussions carried, that the place for the piano in the saloon and the number and disposition of the small-arms were already definitely settled. At first, in spite of the severity of the climate and the proverbial roughness of the weather, they had looked chiefly to the Atlantic seaboard, but in the end of March, when Mrs. Stevenson left Saranac for California on a visit to her people, she was instructed to report if she

could find any craft suitable for their purpose at San Francisco.

At last, by the middle of April, Stevenson was free to return to the cities if he chose. He made a heroic effort to deal with the arrears of his correspondence: "In three of my last days I sent away upwards of seventy letters"; and then, turning his steps to New York, he there spent about a fortnight. The time to which he recurred with the greatest pleasure, was an afternoon he spent on a seat in Washington Square enjoying the company and conversation of "Mark Twain." But of the city he soon wearied; in the beginning of May he crossed the Hudson, and went to an hotel near the mouth of the Manasquan, a river in New Jersey, where with his mother and stepson he spent nearly a month. The place had been recommended to him by Mr. Low, who was able to spend some time there, and who says: "Though it was early spring and the weather was far from good, Louis (pretending that, in comparison with Scotland at least, it was fine spring weather) was unusually well, and we had many a pleasant sail on the river and some rather long walks. Louis was much interested in the "cat-boat," and, with the aid of various works on sailing-vessels, tried to master the art of sailing it with some success.

"He was here at Manasquan when a telegram arrived from his wife, who had been in San Francisco for a few weeks, announcing that the yacht *Casco* might be hired for a trip among the islands of the South Seas. I was there at the time, and Louis made that decision to go, which exiled him from his dearest

friends—though he little suspected at the time—while the messenger waited."

The decision taken, Stevenson returned to New York on the 28th, and by the 7th June he had reached California. Who, that has read his description of crossing the mountains on his first journey to the West, but remembers the phrase—"It was like meeting one's wife!" And this time his wife herself was at Sacramento to meet him.

It was a busy time. The *Casco* was the first question—a fore and aft schooner, ninety-five feet in length, of seventy tons burden, built for cruising in Californian waters, though she had once been taken as far as Tahiti. She had most graceful lines, and with her lofty masts, white sails and decks and glittering brasswork, was a lovely craft to the eye, as she sat like a bird upon the water. Her saloon was fitted most luxuriously with silk and velvet of gaudy colours, for no money had been spared in her construction; nevertheless her cockpit was none too safe, her one pump was inadequate in size and almost worthless; the sail-plan forward was meant for racing and not for cruising, and even if the masts were still in good condition, they were quite unfitted for hurricane weather.

Nevertheless the vessel was chartered, and all preparations were put in hand. The owner, Dr. Merritt, an eccentric Californian millionaire, was at first most backward about the whole affair, and, without having seen him, displayed the greatest distrust of Stevenson. The latter was very unwell, and getting rapidly worse, for San Francisco disagreed

with him. Matters hung fire, but at last his wife discovered that Dr. Merritt wanted to meet him. An interview took place and all difficulties vanished. "I'll go ahead now with the yacht," said the doctor: "I'd read things in the papers about Stevenson, and thought he was a kind of crank; but he's a plain, sensible man, that knows what he's talking about just as well as I do."

Along with the yacht, at the owner's request, they gladly engaged his skipper, Captain Otis, who knew the *Casco* well, and the cook, a Chinaman, who passed himself off as a Japanee. The former choice they had no reason to regret, for the captain showed himself a bold and skilful seaman, who, beginning the voyage with a supreme contempt for his new employers, ended it as an intimate and valued friend, whose portrait for the rest may be found in the pages of *The Wrecker*. A crew of four deck-hands, "three Swedes and the inevitable Finn," was engaged by the captain, and four "sea-lawyers" they proved to be; a reporter, trying to ship himself as a hand, was ejected, and a passage was, with great difficulty, refused to a Seventh-Day Adventist, who afterwards with a crew of his fellow-believers travelled over the whole of the South Seas.

The destination of the *Casco* was next to be settled. For a time the choice lay between two groups of islands at a considerable distance, the Galapagos and the Marquesas groups. But after some discussion it was the latter which had been chosen, and so to the Marquesas they went.

In the meantime they were living at the Occidental

Hotel in San Francisco. Virgil Williams was now dead, but Mrs. Williams was indefatigable in their service, and other friends gathered round them, among whom Stevenson was especially drawn to Dr. George Chismore, alike for his Scotch blood, his love of literature, and the force and tenderness of his character. But, as he himself had known trouble in this city, here least of all was he likely to disregard the misfortunes of others. An Australian journalist seven years afterwards wrote to *The Times*:—

"Some years ago I lay ill in San Francisco, an obscure journalist, quite friendless. Stevenson, who knew me slightly, came to my bedside and said, 'I suppose you are like all of us, you don't keep your money. Now, if a little loan, as between one man of letters and another—eh?'

"This to a lad writing rubbish for a vulgar sheet in California."

At last, on June 26th, the party took up their quarters on the *Casco*, and at the dawn of the 28th she was towed outside the Golden Gate, and headed for the south across the long swell of the Pacific.

So with his household he sailed away beyond the sunset, and America, like Europe, was to see him no more.

CHAPTER XIII

SOUTH SEA CRUISES—THE EASTER PACIFIC—JUNE 1888–JUNE 1889

"This climate; these voyagings; these landfalls at dawn; new islands peaking from the morning bank; new forested harbours; new passing alarms of squalls and surf; new interests of gentle natives—the whole tale of my life is better to me than any poem."—*Letters*, iii. 155.

FOR nearly three years to come, Stevenson wandered up and down the face of the Pacific, spending most of his time in the Hawaiian Islands and the Gilberts, in Tahiti, and in Samoa, his future home; during this period, he visited, however cursorily, almost every group of importance in the Eastern and Central Pacific.

The delight these experiences kindled for him can never be expressed, since, apart from one or two phrases in his letters, he has failed to convey any image of it himself. It is hardly too much to say that nobody else in the world would have derived such keen or such varied enjoyment from cruising through these islands, so wild, so beautiful—among their inhabitants so attractive, so remote from experience—in these waters, so fascinating and so dangerous. The very romance that hangs about the South Seas is fatal to any attempt to sustain, among the mazes of detail and necessary explanation, the charm suggested by their name. Stevenson himself set out

to write an account of his wanderings and adventures among the islands it had for years been the dream of his life to see, but as soon as he essayed the task, he was overwhelmed with a mass of legend and history and anthropology. It is hard for people at their own firesides to realise the differences between the islands visited in one cruise in the same ocean. Perhaps some vague and general conception of the diversity of Stevenson's experiences might be formed by imagining a rapid visit to the islands of Sardinia, Sicily, Majorca, and Tenerife, a fresh departure for Jersey and the Iles d'Or, ending with a passing glimpse at the West Indies.

The point now to be considered is not, however, the customs and character of the natives whom Stevenson encountered, but rather how he was affected and influenced by what he saw, the characteristics which were called out in him during the course of his travel, and the impressions which he himself produced.

The first point, as we have seen, was the Marquesas, a group of high[1] islands of extreme beauty, occupied by the French and but seldom visited by travellers, remote from any other group and out of

[1] Islands in the Pacific are usually divided into "high" and "low"; the former being, generally speaking, islands of volcanic origin, often rising several thousand feet above the sea, densely wooded and beautiful in the extreme. These frequently have a barrier reef of coral, protecting what would otherwise be an ironbound coast, but their main structure is igneous rock. "Low" islands are atolls or mere banks built by the coral insect, never more than twenty feet above water, and owing any beauty they possess to the sea, the sun, and the palm-tree. The Marquesas, Tahiti, Samoa, and the Hawaiian group are high islands; the Paumotus, the Gilberts, and the Marshalls are low.

the track of ships and steamers. For these the *Casco* now steered a course of three thousand miles across the open sea. Fortunately the main object of the cruise seemed likely to be gained without delay; the warmer climate and the sea air suited Stevenson at once, and he grew stronger day by day. The voyage was pleasant but without event other than the passing squalls; and after two-and-twenty days at sea they made their landfall. "The first experience can never be repeated. The first love, the first sunrise, the first South Sea Island, are memories apart and touched a virginity of sense. On the 28th of July 1888, the moon was an hour down by four in the morning, . . . and it was half-past five before we could distinguish our expected islands from the clouds on the horizon. The interval was passed on deck in the silence of expectation, the customary thrill of landfall heightened by the strangeness of the shores that we were then approaching. Slowly they took shape in the attenuating darkness. Uahuna, piling up to a truncated summit, appeared the first upon the starboard bow; almost abeam arose our destination, Nukahiva, whelmed in cloud; and betwixt, and to the southward, the first rays of the sun displayed the needles of Uapu. These pricked about the line of the horizon, like the pinnacles of some ornate and monstrous church, they stood there, in the sparkling brightness of the morning, the fit signboard of a world of wonders. . . . The land heaved up in peaks and rising vales; it fell in cliffs and buttresses; its colour ran through fifty modulations in a scale of pearl and rose and olive; and it was

crowned above by opalescent clouds. The suffusion of vague hues deceived the eye; the shadows of clouds were confounded with the articulations of the mountain; and the isle, and its unsubstantial canopy, rose and shimmered before us like a single mass. There was no beacon, no smoke of towns to be expected, no plying pilot. . . .

"We bore away along the shore. On our port-beam we might hear the explosions of the surf; a few birds flew fishing under the prow; there was no other sound or mark of life, whether of man or beast, in all that quarter of the island. Winged by her own impetus and the dying breeze, the *Casco* skimmed under cliffs, opened out a cove, showed us a beach and some green trees, and flitted by again, bowing to the swell. . . . Again the cliff yawned, but now with a deeper entry; and the *Casco*, hauling her wind, began to slide into the bay of Anaho. Rude and bare hills embraced the inlet upon either hand; it was enclosed to the landward by a bulk of shattered mountains. In every crevice of that barrier the forest harboured, roosting and nesting there like birds about a ruin; and far above, it greened and roughened the razor edges of the summit.

"Under the eastern shore, our schooner, now bereft of any breeze, continued to creep in; the smart creature, when once under way, appearing motive in herself. From close aboard arose the bleating of young lambs; a bird sang in the hillside; the scent of the land, and of a hundred fruits or flowers flowed forth to meet us; and, presently, a house or two appeared. . . . The mark of anchorage was a blow-hole in

the rocks, near the south-easterly corner of the bay. Punctually to our use, the blow-hole spouted; the schooner turned upon her heel; the anchor plunged. It was a small sound, a great event; my soul went down with these moorings whence no windlass may extract nor any diver fish it up; and I, and some part of my ship's company, were from that hour the bond-slaves of the isles of Vivien."

This was Nukahiva, the island of Herman Melville's *Typee*, and here for three weeks they lay in Anaho Bay, where there lived only natives and one white trader. They then sailed round to the south coast of the same island, to Taiohae, the port of entry and the capital of the group.

The two special features of the Marquesas which differentiate them from the other islands which Stevenson saw, are first, that the natives were till very recently the most inveterate cannibals of Polynesia, and second, that their population was melting away like snow off a dyke, so that extinction seemed imminent within the next few years.

Into the details of his visit I have no intention of going—partly they may be read in his own volume *In the South Seas*—but I would draw attention to Stevenson's attitude toward the native races, for though I shall have occasion to return to it again in Samoa, there was but little growth or development of his essential feelings or principles in dealing with them. Intelligent sympathy was the keynote, and the same kindliness to them as to all men. He never idealised them, and his view was but rarely affected by sentiment. His sense of history, combined with

his power of seeing things in a new light, and the refusal to accept commonplaces without examination, here stood him in good stead.

Five years before, in the Riviera, he had written: "There is no form of conceit more common or more silly than to look down on barbarous codes of morals. Barbarous virtues, the chivalrous point of honour, the fidelity of the wild Highlander or the two-sworded Japanese, are of a generous example."

This was of the Japanese in their recent feudal period: here is one of his earliest notes in the Marquesas, after meeting the natives face to face:—

August 3rd.—Tropical Night Thoughts. I awoke this morning about three; the night was heavenly in scent and temperature; the long swell brimmed into the bay and seemed to fill it full and then subside; silently, gently, and deeply the *Casco* rolled; only at times a block piped like a bird. I sat and looked seaward towards the mouth of the bay at the headlands and the stars; at the constellation of diamonds, each infinitesimally small, each individual and of equal lustre, and all shining together in heaven like some old-fashioned clasp; at the planet with the visible moon, as though he were beginning to re-people heaven by the process of gemination; at many other lone lamps and marshalled clusters. And upon a sudden it ran into my mind, even with shame, that these were lovelier than our nights in the north, the planets softer and brighter, and the constellations more handsomely arranged. I felt shame, I say, as at an ultimate infidelity: that I should desert the stars that shone upon my father; and turning to the

shore-side, where there were some high squalls overhead, and the mountains loomed up black, I could have fancied I had slipped ten thousand miles away and was anchored in a Highland loch; that when day came and made clear the superimpending slopes, it would show pine and the red heather and the green fern, and roofs of turf sending up the smoke of peats, and the alien speech that should next greet my ears should be Gaelic, not Kanaka.[1]

"The singular narrowness of this world's range, and, above all, the paucity of human combinations, are forced alike upon the reader and the traveller. The one ranging through books, the other over peopled space, comes with astonishment on the same scenery, the same merry stories, the same fashion, the same stage of social evolution. Under cover of darkness here might be a Hebridean harbour; and if I am to call these men savages (which no bribe would induce me to do), what name should I find for Hebridean man? The Highlands and Islands somewhat more than a century back were in much the same convulsive and transitory state as the Marquesas to-day. In the one, the cherished habit of tattooing; in the other, a cherished costume, proscribed; in both, the men disarmed, the chiefs dishonoured, new fashions introduced, and chiefly that new pernicious fashion of regarding money as the be-all and end-all of existence; the commercial age, in each case, succeeding at a bound to the age mili-

[1] Kanaka, the Hawaiian word for a man, is used in the Eastern and Central Pacific as equivalent to "native," "Polynesian." In Australia and Fiji it generally means Melanesian = black boy.

tant: war, with its truces and its courtesies, succeeded by peace with its meanness and its unending effort: the means of life no longer wrested with a bare face from hereditary enemies, but ground or cheated out of next-door neighbours and old family friends; in each case, a man's luxury cut off, beef driven under cover of night from lowland pastures denied to the meat-loving Highlander, long pig pirated from the next village to the man-eating Kanaka."

And here is the practical outcome of his experience as a traveller, written in 1890, a passage specially selected for praise by so able and original an investigator as Mary Kingsley:—

"When I desired any detail of savage custom, or of superstitious belief, I cast back in the story of my fathers, and fished for what I wanted with some trait of equal barbarism: Michael Scott, Lord Derwentwater's head, the second-sight, the Water Kelpie,—each of these I have found to be a killing bait; the black bull's head of Stirling procured me the legend of Rahero; and what I knew of the Cluny Macphersons, or the Appin Stewarts, enabled me to learn, and helped me to understand, about the *Tevas* of Tahiti. The native was no longer ashamed, his sense of kinship grew warmer, and his lips were opened. It is this sense of kinship that the traveller must rouse and share; or he had better content himself with travels from the blue bed to the brown."

It is pleasant to read of the farewell of Prince Stanilao, an intelligent and educated gentleman, from whom Stevenson had learned much of the history and

condition of the islands, and with whom he had spent a long afternoon, telling him the story of Gordon, "and many episodes of the Indian Mutiny, Lucknow, the second battle of Cawnpore, the relief of Arrah, the death of poor Spottiswoode and Sir Hugh Rose's hot-spur midland campaign." How many white men would have been at the pains to give so much instruction or so much pleasure to a native in a foreign possession? This is the result: "Ah vous devriez rester ici, mon cher ami. Vous êtes les gens qu'il faut pour les Kanaques; vous êtes doux, vous et votre famille; vous seriez obéis dans toutes les îles."

It was the same at Anaho, the same afterwards in Atuona: he understood the natives; he treated them with understanding, and they liked him. The higher the rank, for the most part, the greater the liking, the more complete the appreciation. Stanilao and Vaekehu, the aged queen, were the great folk of the archipelago; Stevenson, in whom snobbishness was unknown, found them also the most estimable.

"This is the rule in Polynesia, with few exceptions; the higher the family, the better the man—better in sense, better in manners, and usually taller and stronger in body. A stranger advances blindfold. He scrapes acquaintance as he can. Save the tattoo in the Marquesas, nothing indicates the difference in rank; and yet almost invariably we found, after we had made them, that our friends were persons of station."

But his attention was by no means limited to natives; the behaviour that he enjoined on missionaries he exercised freely himself; to white men and half-castes he was equally genial and accessible. The

governor and the gendarmes, the priests and the lay-brothers, the traders and the "Beach," all found him kindly and courteous, and the best of company.

The Resident carried him off to show him the prison, but it was empty; the women were gone calling and the men were shooting goats upon the mountains. The gendarmes told him stories of the Franco-German war, and gave him charming French meals. Of the missionaries, the portraits of the great and good Dordillon, the veteran bishop only just dead, and of Frère Michel, the architect, may be found in the South Sea volume; from Stevenson's notes I give the charming picture of Père Siméon:—

"Père Siméon, the small frail figure in the black robe drawing near under the palms; the girlish, kind and somewhat pretty face under the straw hat; the strong rustic Gascon accent; the sudden lively doffing of the hat, at once so French and so ecclesiastical; he was a man you could not look upon without visions of his peasant ancestors, worthy folk, sitting at home to-day in France, and rejoiced (I hope often) with letters from their boy. Down we sat together under the eaves of the house of Taipi-Kikino, and were presently deep in talk. I had feared to meet a missionary, feared to find the narrowness and the self-sufficiency that deface their publications, that too often disgrace their behaviour. There was no fear of it here; Père Siméon admired these natives as I do myself, admired them with spiritual envy; the superior of his congregation had said to him on his departure: 'You are going among a people more civilised than we—*peut-être plus civilisés que nous-mêmes*': in spite of

which warning, having read some books of travel on his voyage, he came to these shores (like myself) expecting to find them peopled with lascivious monkeys. Good Bishop Dordillon had opened his eyes 'There are nothing but lies in books of travel,' said the bishop.

"What then was Père Siméon doing here? The question rose in my mind, and I could see that he read the thought. Truly they were a people, on the whole, of a mind far liker Christ's than any of the races of Europe; no spiritual life, almost no family life, but a kindness, a generosity, a readiness to give and to forgive, without parallel; to some extent that was the bishop's doing; some of it had been since undone; death runs so busy in their midst, total extinction so instantly impended, that it seemed a hopeless task to combat their vices; as they were, they would go down in the abyss of things past; the watchers were already looking at the clock; Père Siméon's business was the visitation of the sick, to smooth the pillows of this dying family of man."

In contrast to this melancholy vigil were Stevenson's ecstasy of life and the joy with which he entered into gathering shells upon the shore.

"Ashore to the cove and hunted shells, according to my prevision; but the delight of it was a surprise. To stand in the silver margin of the sea, now dry shod, now buried to the ankle in the thrilling coolness, now higher than the knee; to watch, as the reflux drew down, wonderful marvels of colour and design fleeting between my feet, to grasp at, to miss, to seize them; and now to find them what they promised, and

now to catch only *maya* of coloured sand, pounded fragments, and pebbles, that, as soon as they were dry, became as dull and homely as the flint upon a garden path. I toiled about this childish pleasure in the strong sun for hours, sharply conscious of my incurable ignorance, and yet too much pleased to be ashamed. Presently I came round upon the shelves that line the bottom of the cliff; and there, in a pool where the last of the surf sometimes irrupted, making it bubble like a spring, I found my best, that is, my strangest shell. It was large, as large as a woman's head, rugged as rock, in colour variegated with green and orange; but alas, the 'poor inhabitant' was at home. On the struggles of conscience that ensued I scorn to dwell; but my curiosity, after several journeys in my hand, returned finally to his rock home, of whose sides he greedily laid hold, and he gained a second term of the pleasures of existence."

On August 22nd the *Casco* left Nukahiva and arrived the following day at Taahauku in the island of Hiva-oa, a more remote and even more thinly populated island. Here they stayed twelve days, and here Stevenson and his family went through the ceremony of adoption into the family of Paa-aeua, the official chief of Atuona, while Mr. Osbourne "made brothers" also with the deposed hereditary chief, Moipu.

These observances meant anything or nothing, according to the desire of the initiated. I single them out for mention here because (apart from white men living among the Kanakas) they were offered to and accepted by those only who, like Bishop

Dordillon, had a close intimacy and sympathy with the natives.

The time had come to start for Tahiti by a course lying through the Paumotus or Dangerous Archipelago, a group of numerous low islands, unlighted save for one or two pier-head lamps, and most inadequately laid down upon the chart.

For this reason at Taiohae they had shipped a mate who knew those waters well. The much-travelled "Japanese" cook had been returned to his home, and his place taken by a genuine Chinaman. Ah Fu came to the Marquesas as a child and had grown up among the natives; he now followed the fortunes of his new masters with entire devotion for two years until the claims of his family were asserted and took him home reluctantly to China.

On September 4th the *Casco* sailed, and three days later, before sunset, the captain expected to sight the first of the Paumotus.

It was not, however, till sunrise on the following morning that they saw land, and then it was not the island they had expected to make; in place of having been driven to the west, they had been swept by a current some thirty miles in the opposite direction. The first atoll was "flat as a plate in the sea, and spiked with palms of disproportioned altitude." The next, seen some hours later, was "lost in blue sea and sky; a ring of white beach, green underwood, and tossing palms, gemlike in colour; of a fairy, of a heavenly prettiness. The surf was all round it, white as snow, and broke at one point, far to seaward, on what seems an uncharted reef."

Night fell again, and found them amid a wilderness of reefs corresponding so little with the maps that the schooner must lie to and wait for the morning.

The next day they ran on to Fakarava, and entered the lagoon in safety. It was a typical low island, some eighty miles in circumference by a couple of hundred yards broad, chosen to be the headquarters of the government only on account of two excellent passages in the barrier reef, one of which was sure to be always available.

In one respect they were fortunate: "We were scarce well headed for the pass before all heads were craned over the rail. For the water, shoaling under our board, became changed in a moment to surprising hues of blue and grey; and in its transparency the coral branched and blossomed, and the fish of the inland sea cruised visibly below us, stained and striped, and even beaked like parrots. . . . I have since entered, I suppose, some dozen atolls in different parts of the Pacific, and the experience has never been repeated. That exquisite hue and transparency of submarine day, and these shoals of rainbow fish, have not enraptured me again."

A fortnight spent in Fakarava passed uneventfully away. There were few inhabitants left on the island, which was never very populous at any time. Stevenson lived ashore in a house among the palms, where he learned much of the natives and their customs and beliefs from the half-caste Vice-President, M. Donat.

In the last week of September they left for Tahiti, and in two days were anchored safely at Papeete,

the capital and port of entry of the Society group. Beautiful as all the high islands of the South Seas are, it is in Tahiti and its neighbours—the Otaheite of Captain Cook—that the extreme point of sublimity and luxuriance is reached. The vegetation is not less lovely, nor the streams and waterfalls less beautiful or less abundant than elsewhere, but the crags and pinnacles of the lofty mountains there are far more picturesque, and so abrupt that they are not smothered in the greenery, which gives an appearance of tameness to other islands in the same latitudes.

Stevenson and his wife lived ashore in a small house, where he prepared his correspondence for the outgoing mail. He was very unwell; he went nowhere, saw no one of any interest, native or foreign, and soon grew tired of Papeete. A cold caught at Fakarava increased, with access of fever and an alarming cough. He mended a little, but Papeete was not a success, so after a time the *Casco*, with a pilot on board, took the party round to Taravao on the south side of the island. On this passage they were twice nearly lost. The first day they had a long beat off the lee-shore of the island of Eimeo; and the following day were suddenly becalmed, and began to drift towards the barrier reef of Tahiti. "The reefs were close in," wrote Stevenson, "with, my eye! what a surf! The pilot thought we were gone, and the captain had a boat cleared, when a lucky squall came to our rescue. My wife, hearing the order given about the boats, remarked to my mother, 'Isn't that nice? We shall soon be ashore!' Thus does the female mind unconsciously skirt along the verge

of eternity." Their danger was undoubtedly great, greater far than they suspected.

The atmosphere at Taravao was close, and mosquitoes were numerous; by this time Stevenson was so ill that it was necessary, without a moment's delay, to secure more healthy quarters. Accordingly his wife went ashore, and following a path, discovered the shanty of a Chinaman who owned a wagon and a pair of horses. These she hired to take them to Tautira, the nearest village of any size, a distance of sixteen miles over a road crossed by one-and-twenty streams. Stevenson was placed in the cart, and, sustained by small doses of coca, managed, with the help of his wife and Valentine, to reach his destination before he collapsed altogether. Being introduced at Tautira by the gendarme, they were asked an exorbitant rent for a suitable house, but they secured it, and there made the patient as comfortable as possible. The next day there arrived the Princess Moë, ex-Queen of Raiatea, one of the kindest and most charming of Tahitians, who lives in the pages of Pierre Loti and Miss Gordon-Cumming. She had come to the village, and hearing there was a white man very ill, she came over to the house. "I feel that she saved Louis' life," writes Mrs. Stevenson. "He was lying in a deep stupor when she first saw him, suffering from congestion of the lungs and in a burning fever. As soon as he was well enough, she invited us to live with her in the house of Ori, the sub-chief of the village, and we gladly accepted her invitation."

Meanwhile, at Taravao, it was discovered that the

schooner's jib-boom was sprung; it was duly spliced, and when Stevenson was really better, the *Casco* came round to Tautira. Here a more startling discovery was made, and the party learned what their true position had been two or three weeks before. The elder Mrs. Stevenson gave a feast on board to the women of Tautira, and one old lady offered up a prayer, asking that if anything were wrong with the masts it might be discovered in time. As soon as the guests were gone, the Yankee skipper, acting no doubt on the principle of keeping his powder dry, went aloft, and subjected the masts to a close examination. They were both almost eaten out with dry-rot. Had either of them gone by the board during the voyage in the Moorea channel, or off the reefs in any of the islands, nothing could have saved the *Casco*, even if her passengers and crew had escaped in one of the boats. It was now considered hardly safe for any one to remain on deck; but, with many reefs in her mainsail, the schooner was sent to Papeete, where the masts were patched up as far as was possible, no new spars of sufficient size being obtainable.

The intended visit to the neighbouring islands of Huahine, Raiatea, and Borabora was abandoned, Stevenson and his party remaining at Tautira until the *Casco* should be ready to take them back to civilisation. His health again recovered, and he enjoyed the new conditions of life beyond words—scenery, climate, and company. Tautira was "the most beautiful spot" and "its people the most amiable" he had ever encountered. Except for the French gendarme

and Père Bruno, the priest, a Dutchman from Amsterdam who had forgotten his own language, the travellers had passed beyond the range of Europeans and lived in a Tahiti touched as little as might be by any foreign influence. They dwelt in one of the curious "bird-cage" houses of the island, and were on the friendliest terms with all the village.

Their host, Ori, was a perpetual delight to them all. "A Life-guardsman in appearance," as Mr. Osbourne describes him, "six foot three in bare feet; deep and broad in proportion; unconsciously English to an absurd extent; feared, respected, and loved."

It was one of the happiest periods in the exile's life, and perhaps in consequence his "journal," an irregularly kept notebook, was dropped, never to be resumed. And so it happens that to this passage in his life he never returned, pen in hand, and of it he has left no other record than one or two pages in his correspondence.

He "actually went sea-bathing almost every day"; he collected songs and legends, materials for the great book; he began to work once more at his novel, *The Master of Ballantrae*, and "almost finished" it. At Moë's instance special exhibitions of the old songs and dances of Tahiti were given for him in the hall of assembly in Tautira. He was adopted into the clan of the Tevas, to which Ori belonged, and exchanged names with that chief, who thenceforward signed himself as "Rui,"[1] Louis himself receiving also, in more formal fashion, the name of Territera.

He now wrote the greater part of his two Polynesian

[1] *I. e.*, Louis: there being no L in Tahitian.

ballads, *The Feast of Famine*, relating to the Marquesas, and *The Song of Rahero*, a genuine legend of the Tevas. In the same days, however, his music brought him to write for the old Scots tune of "Wandering Willie" that most pathetic cry of his exile:—

"Home, no more home to me, whither must I wander?"

almost the only complaint, even in a dramatic form, that he ever allowed himself to make.

The repairs of the *Casco* took an unexpected time; the weather became bad, and a stormy sea and rivers in flood prevented any communication between Tautira and Papeete. The visitors used up all their money: Ori had taken charge of it for them and doled it out, a small piece at a time, until all was gone. Their supplies of food being exhausted, they were reduced to living on the bounty of the natives, and though Stevenson himself continued to eat sucking-pig with continual enjoyment, the others pined for a change. When time passed and no ship came, the whole countryside began to join in their anxiety. Each morning, as soon as the dawn lifted, a crowd ran to the beach, and the cry came back: "*E ita pahi!*" (No ship).

At last Ori took a party of young men in a whale-boat, although the weather was still bad, and went to Papeete to find out the cause of the delay. "When Ori left," says Mrs. Stevenson, "we besought him not to go, for we knew he was risking the lives of himself and his men. Then he was gone a week over time, which made us heart-sick. He brought back the necessary money and a store of provisions, and a

letter from the captain telling us when to look for him. Amongst the food was a basket of champagne. The next day we gave a commemoration dinner to Ori, when we produced the champagne. Ori drank his glass and announced it beyond excellence, a drink for chiefs. 'I shall drink it continually,' he added, pouring out a fresh glass. 'What is the cost of it by the bottle?' Louis told him, whereupon Ori solemnly replaced his full glass, saying, 'It is not fit that even kings should drink a wine so expensive.' It took him days to recover from the shock."

At last the *Casco* was ready for sea, and on Christmas Day the party embarked for Honolulu. The farewell with Ori was heart-breaking, and all vowed never again to stay so long as two months in one place, or to form so deep and yet so brief a friendship.

They sighted the outlying Paumotus and the mail schooner, and after that their voyage was without other incident than squalls and calms. For a while they skirted hurricane weather, though nothing came of it; but between calms and contrary winds their progress was slow, and they nearly ran out of provisions. "We were nearly a week hanging about the Hawaiian group," wrote Osbourne, "drifting here and there with different faint slants of wind. We had little luxuries kept back for our farewell dinner—which took place at least three times with a diminishing splendour that finally struck bottom on salt horse. It was a strange experience to see the distant lights of Honolulu, and then go to bed hungry; to rise again in the morning, and find ourselves, not nearer, but further off. When at last the weather altered and

we got our wind, it was a snoring Trade, and we ran into the harbour like a steamboat. It was a dramatic entry for the overdue and much-talked-of *Casco*, flashing past the buoys and men-of-war, with the pilot in a panic of alarm. If the *Casco* ever did thirteen knots, she did it then."

Arrived at Honolulu they found their safety had been despaired of by all, including even Mrs. Stevenson's daughter, Mrs. Strong, who was then living there with her husband and child.

Of the capital city of the Hawaiian kingdom it is difficult to give any true impression, so curious in those days was the mixture of native life and civilisation. To any one coming from the islands it seemed a purely American city—not of the second or even of the third rank, modified only by its position in the verge of the tropics; for any one who entered these latitudes and saw a native population for the first time, it must have been picturesque and exotic beyond words.

Stevenson sent the yacht back to San Francisco, and took a house at Waikiki, some four miles from Honolulu along the coast. Here he took up his abode in a *lanai*—a sort of large pavilion, off which the bedrooms opened, built on native lines, and provided only with jalousied shutters; and here he settled down in earnest to finish *The Master of Ballantræ* —"the hardest job I ever had to do"—already running in *Scribner's Magazine*, and to be completed within a given time.

He did not end his task till May—"*The Master* is finished, and I am quite a wreck and do not care for

literature." When the story was finally published in the autumn, it was at once recognized on all hands as the sternest and loftiest note of tragedy which its author had yet delivered. "I'm not strong enough to stand writing of that kind," said Sir Henry Yule on his deathbed to S. R. Crockett, who had been reading it to him; "it's grim as the road to Lucknow."

In the meantime, though Stevenson was constantly unwell, even his want of health at the worst of these times was very different from his invalid life at Bournemouth. He retired with his wife to a small and less draughty cottage about a hundred yards from the *lanai*, and there continued his work as before.

The little colony was very comfortably settled. Valentine had left their service and departed to America, but Ah Fu had established himself in the kitchen with his pots and pans.

In spite of his worse health, Stevenson was able to go about as usual, and saw a good many people, especially in the large circle of his step-daughter's acquaintance. Through this connection he found from the beginning a ready *entrée* to the Royal Palace, where Kalakaua, the last of the Hawaiian kings, held his court at Yvetot: a large, handsome, genial, dissipated monarch, a man of real ability and iron constitution, versed beyond any of his subjects in the history and legends of his kingdom. From the very beginning of the acquaintance his relations with Stevenson were most friendly in no conventional sense. They genuinely liked one another from the start, and Kalakaua, holding out every inducement,

really tried very hard to get his visitor to settle in Hawaii.

At Honolulu, Stevenson already began to hear a good deal of Samoa and its troubles, for several of his new friends had formed part of the amazing embassy Kalakaua had sent to Apia in the preceding year to propose a native federation of the Polynesian Islands. It was on the information now received that he was driven to write the first of his letters to *The Times*.

The letter appeared on the 11th March, and before the week was out there occurred the great Samoan hurricane which sunk or stranded six men-of-war in the harbour of Apia, when the *Calliope* alone, by virtue of her engines, steamed out of the gap in the very teeth of the gale.

Immediately afterwards, Stevenson records a curious episode at Honolulu in a letter to Mr. Baxter:—

"*27th April*, 1889.—A pretty touch of seaman manners: the English and American Jacks are deadly rivals: well, after all this hammering of both sides by the Germans, and then the news of the hurricane from Samoa, a singular scene occurred here the Sunday before last. The two church parties *sponte propria* fell in line together, one Englishman to one American, and marched down to the harbour like one ship's company. None were more surprised than their own officers. I have seen a hantle of the seaman on this cruise; I always liked him before; my first crew on the *Casco* (five sea-lawyers) near cured me; but I have returned to my first love."

At Samoa we shall see that he had many friends in the navy: in nothing did he take more delight than in

their company and friendship. Of this there was already a beginning at Honolulu with the wardroom of H.B.M.S. *Cormorant*. "I had been twice to lunch on board, and H.B.M.'s seamen are making us hammocks; so we are very naval. But alas, the *Cormorant* is only waiting her relief, and I fear there are not two ships of that stamp in all the navies of the world."

The hammocks were part of his preparations for a new cruise. He had arrived with the intention of crossing America during the course of the summer, and so returning to England, with ultimate views of Madeira as a winter refuge. But even Honolulu was too cold for him, and by the end of March he was full of another scheme of South Sea travel. This time his voyage was to be to the Gilbert Islands to the south-west, on board the vessel belonging to the Boston Mission or whatever other craft he could induce to take him. His mother decided to return to Scotland and visit her sister, but his wife and stepson looked eagerly forward to sharing with him this new experience.

In the end of April he paid a visit by himself to the lee-shore of the island of Hawaii, and spent a week on the coastlands, living with a native judge. Here he took long rides, and saw and learned as much of native life and characteristics as lay within his reach; the most thrilling event of the visit being the departure of some natives to be immured in the lazaretto of Molokai.

A month later he visited the island of Molokai itself and spent by special permission a week in the leper

settlement. Father Damien had died on the fifteenth of April, so that Stevenson heard only by report of the man whose memory he did so much to vindicate.

The scene of Damien's labours is one of the most striking places in the world. A low promontory, some three miles long, with a village upon either side of it, lies at the foot of a beetling precipice, that shuts it off from the remainder of the island to which there is no access except by a most difficult bridle-track. Hither, since 1865, have been sent all persons in the group who are found to have contracted leprosy, and here they are tended by doctor and priest, by officers and sisters and nurses, until they die. Who can do justice to such a place, to such a scene? Here Stevenson spent a week, and afterwards wrote a fragmentary and incomplete account of his visit. The best record of it is contained in the letters written at the time to his wife, and shortly afterwards to James Payn and Sidney Colvin. The description of his landing cannot be omitted.

"Our lepers were sent (from the steamer) in the first boat, about a dozen, one poor child very horrid, one white man leaving a large grown family behind him in Honolulu, and then into the second stepped the sisters and myself. I do not know how it would have been with me had the sisters not been there. My horror of the horrible is about my weakest point; but the moral loveliness at my elbow blotted all else out; and when I found that one of them was crying, poor soul, quietly under her veil, I cried a little myself; then I felt as right as a trivet, only a little crushed to be there so uselessly. I thought it was a sin and a

shame she should feel unhappy; I turned round to her, and said something like this: "Ladies, God Himself is here to give you welcome. I'm sure it is good for me to be beside you; I hope it will be blessed to me; I thank you for myself and the good you do me." It seemed to cheer her up; but indeed I had scarce said it when we were at the landing-stairs, and there was a great crowd, hundreds of (God save us!) pantomime masks in poor human flesh, waiting to receive the sisters and the new patients.

". . . Gilfillan, a good fellow, I think, and far from a stupid, kept up his hard Lowland Scottish talk in the boat while the sister was covering her face; but I believe he knew, and did it (partly) in embarrassment, and part perhaps in mistaken kindness. And that was one reason, too, why I made my speech to them. Partly, too, I did it, because I was ashamed to do so, and remembered one of my golden rules, "When you are ashamed to speak, speak up at once." But, mind you, that rule is only golden with strangers; with your own folks, there are other considerations."

After leaving the leper settlement the steamer landed him upon another part of the island, where he and the captain took horse and rode a long way to the house of some Irish folk, where Stevenson slept. Next day he continued with a native guide until he reached the summit of the pass above Kalawao, down which alone the settlement could be entered by land.

Of his ride across the island he wrote:—"Maui behind us towered into clouds and the shadow of clouds.

The bare opposite island of Lanai—the reef far out, enclosing a dirty, shoal lagoon—a range of fish-ponds, large as docks, and the slope of the shady beach on which we mostly rode, occupied the left hand. On the right hand the mountain rose in steeps of red clay and spouts of disintegrated rock, sparsely dotted with the white-flowering cow-thistle. Here and there along the foreshore stood a lone pandanus, and once a trinity of dishevelled palms. In all the first part of that journey, I recall but three houses and a single church. Plenty of horses, kine and sullen-looking bulls were there; but not a human countenance. "Where are the people?" I asked. "*Pau Kanaka makè:* Done: people dead," replied the guide, with the singular childish giggle which the traveller soon learns to be a mark of Polynesian sensibility.

From this expedition he returned to complete his preparations for immediate departure. The family now possessed an unrivalled fund of information about "the Islands," and had accumulated not only the necessary stores, but also a collection of all the resources of civilisation best fitted to appeal to the native heart, ranging from magic lanterns and American hand-organs to "cheap and bad cigars." The only difficulty was the ship, and the *Morning Star* not being available, the *Equator*, a trading schooner of sixty-two tons register, Captain Denis Reid, was chartered. The terms agreed upon were original and entertaining; Stevenson paid a lump sum down for a four months' cruise with a proviso for renewal, if necessary. The ship agreed for a fixed daily extra price to land at any place in the line of its trading

cruise on Stevenson's written demand. On the other hand, when it stopped anywhere for its own business, were it only to land a sewing-machine or to take on board a ton of copra, it was bound, if the charterer so desired, to remain there three days without extra charge.

The twenty-fourth of June arrived: Stevenson and his wife and stepson were on board with the indispensable Ah Fu, and the schooner was ready to cast off. At the last moment two fine carriages drove down at full speed to the wharf and there deposited King Kalakaua and a party of his native musicians. There was but a minute for good-bye and a parting glass, for Kalakaua had none of Ori's scruples over champagne. The king returned to shore and stood there waving his hand, while from the musicians, lined up on the very edge of the wharf, came the tender strains of a farewell.

CHAPTER XIV

SOUTH SEA CRUISES—THE CENTRAL PACIFIC—JUNE 1889–APRIL 1891

"I will never leave the sea, I think; it is only there that a Briton lives: my poor grandfather, it is from him that I inherit the taste, I fancy, and he was round many islands in his day; but I, please God, shall beat him at that before the recall is sounded. . . . Life is far better fun than people dream who fall asleep among the chimney-stacks and telegraph wires."—*Letters*, iii. 159.

THE object of the new cruise for Stevenson was to visit a native race of a different character from those he had already seen, living as far as was still possible under purely natural conditions. The Gilberts are a group of some sixteen low islands of no great size, densely populated, situated close to the Equator. At this time they were independent, nearly every island being governed by its own king or council of elders. Scenery in all of them is reduced to the simplest elements, a strand with cocoa-nut-palms and pandanus, and the sea—one island differing from another only in having or not having an accessible lagoon in its centre; in none of them is the highest point of land as much as twenty feet above sea-level. This very flatness and absence of striking features render the islands a more perfect theatre for effects of light and cloud, while the splendours of the sea are further enhanced by the contrast of the rollers break-

ing on the reef and the still lagoon sleeping within the barrier, of the dark depths of ocean outside, and the brilliant shoal-water varying infinitely in hue with the inequalities of the shallows within.

Stevenson's former experience lay, his future was almost entirely to lie, among the Polynesians—the tall, fine, copper-coloured race, speaking closely allied dialects of the same language, and including among their family the Hawaiians, Marquesans, Tahitians, Samoans, and the Maoris of New Zealand. The Gilbert and Marshall natives, on the other hand, are Micronesians—darker, shorter, and to my taste less comely folk—speaking languages widely removed from the Polynesian—people with a dash of black blood, stricter in morals and more ferocious, with an energy and backbone which the others but rarely possess. It is noteworthy that Polynesians never commit suicide; on the Line it is not uncommon; and the frequent causes are unrequited love, or grief for the dead.

When this visit should be finished, the travellers were not finally committed to any plan, but their latest intention was to proceed to the Marshalls and thence to the Carolines, and so "return to the light of day by way of Manila and the China ports."

Scarcely, however, were they at sea before these schemes were modified. One moonlight night, in the neighbourhood of Johnstone Island, the talk fell upon the strange history of the loss of the brigantine, *Wandering Minstrel*, and from this germ was quickly developed the plot of *The Wrecker*. The life of cruising was for the time all that Stevenson could

desire: after the depression of Honolulu he had entirely recovered his health and spirits on the open sea, and the only difficulty in continuing his cure was its great expense. Surely if he possessed a schooner of his own, he might make his home on board and pay the current charges, at all events in part, by trading. So *The Wrecker* was to be written and sent to a publisher from Samoa, and there, with the proceeds, they were to buy a schooner, stock the trade-room, and start upon their wanderings under the guidance of Denis Reid, who threw himself heart and soul into the spirit of the new venture.

It was a wild scheme. Versatile as Stevenson was, it is impossible even to think of him as a "South Sea merchant," haggling with natives over the price of copra, and retailing European goods to them at a necessarily exorbitant rate. But the project, though never realised, did finally determine the course of his life, for instead of taking him to Ponape, Guam, and the Philippines, it sent him south to Samoa, there to take up his abode and live and die.

In the meanwhile the first part of the voyage was safely performed, and the schooner arrived at the town of Butaritari in the island of Great Makin. Under ordinary conditions a white man, if he conducted himself reasonably, might wander through all the group in perfect safety, but the arrival of the *Equator* fell at an unpropitious moment. For the first and probably the only time in his wanderings, Stevenson was in real danger of violence from natives.

The two principal firms trading in Butaritari belonged to San Francisco; the missionaries in the group

were sent there by the Boston Society, and the influence of American ideas was considerable. Nine days before Stevenson's arrival was the Fourth of July, the day on which American Independence is celebrated throughout the States. The king of Butaritari had observed the festival with enthusiasm, but not wisely, nor in accordance with missionary views, for he had removed the taboo upon spirits which ordinarily was imposed for all his subjects.

Neither sovereign nor courtiers had been sober since, and though, with a lofty Sabbatarianism, the king declined to be photographed upon a Sunday, it was not to be supposed that he could be refused more drink if he offered to purchase it at the usual price. There was this further difficulty in the way of restoring sobriety to his dominions, that even if one firm declined to supply him, there was the rival house, which, having as yet sold less of its liquor, might be less anxious for the special open season to come to an end. So the carnival continued for ten days more, and all the white men could do was to get out their pistols and show in public such skill as they possessed in shooting at a mark.

Twice a large stone was hurled at Stevenson as he sat in his verandah at dusk, just as the lamp was brought out and placed beside him. He now entered into negotiations with the German manager of the other firm, whom he found to take a far more serious view of the situation than any of them, and whom he induced by diplomacy to cease to supply the natives. The crisis was now reached: would the populace, irritated by refusal, carry either of the bars with a rush?

Fortunately, all passed off smoothly. The king came to his senses, and the taboo was re-imposed. Quiet was restored, and only just in time, for a day or two later a large body of rather turbulent natives arrived from the next island for a dance competition, quite ready to profit by any political trouble.

The danger having been averted, the party lived at peace in the house of Maka, the Hawaiian missionary, one of the most lovable of men. They saw the dances, they gave exhibitions of their magic lantern, and as all pictures were supposed to be photographs, and photographs could only be taken from actual scenes, their slides of Bible history brought about a distinct religious reaction among the people. They made friends with various natives, but the end of their stay was by comparison tame and dull, and after about a month the *Equator* returned and carried them away.

The terms of the elaborate charter party were entirely disregarded. The captain from the beginning acted as though the vessel were Stevenson's yacht, and went or stayed according to the wishes of his passenger. Stevenson, on his part, took a keen interest in the ship's fortunes, and was as eager to secure copra as any one on board. The captain acted as showman of the group. "I remember once," said Osbourne, "that he banged the deck with a marlinspike and called below to Louis: 'Come on deck, quick; here's the murderer and the poisoner I told you of, coming off in a boat.'"

They visited the island of Nonuti, and were then continuing on a southward course, when the wind

veered and they made for Apemama, a large island ruled by the despot Tembinok' who allowed no white man in his kingdom. As an exceptional favour, however, granted only after a long inspection of the party and two days devoted to consideration, Stevenson and his family were admitted as the special guests of the king. He cleared a site for them, pitched four houses upon it for their accommodation, and tabooed with a death penalty their well and their enclosure against all his subjects. The settlement was begun to the discharge of a rifle; the cook who was lent to the Stevensons, and was guilty of gross misbehaviour, received six shots from the king's Winchester over his head, at his feet, and on either side of him; and though no one was actually killed while the white men were on the island, yet the power of life and death in the king's hands was plainly shown to be no obsolete prerogative.

In Apemama the party spent a couple of months in daily intercourse with this very remarkable personage, with whom they entered into close relations of friendship. Of all the chiefs Stevenson knew in the Pacific, Ori, the Tahitian, was probably the one for whom he had most affection; Mataafa, in Samoa, probably he most respected; but Tembinok' was unquestionably the strongest character, and the man who interested him the most. Who, that has read the South Sea chapters, has forgotten his appearance?

"A beaked profile like Dante's in the mask, a mane of long black hair, the eye brilliant, imperious, and inquiring; for certain parts in the theatre, and to one who could have used it, the face was a fortune. His

voice matched it well, being shrill, powerful, and uncanny, with a note like a sea-bird's. Where there are no fashions, none to set them, few to follow them if they were set, and none to criticise, he dresses—as Sir Charles Grandison lived—"to his own heart." Now he wears a woman's frock, now a naval uniform, now (and more usually) figures in a masquerade costume of his own design—trousers and a singular jacket with shirt tails, the cut and fit wonderful for island workmanship, the material always handsome, sometimes green velvet, sometimes cardinal red silk. This masquerade becomes him admirably. I see him now come pacing towards me in the cruel sun, solitary, a figure out of Hoffmann."

In spite of this grotesque disguise, there was nothing ridiculous about the man. He had been a fighter and a conqueror, "the Napoleon" of his group; he was, besides a poet, a collector, the sole trader and man of business, and a shrewd judge of mankind. Having admitted the missionaries to his island, he had learned to read and write; having found the missionaries interfering, as he thought, with his trade and his government, without hesitation he had banished them from his domains.

For the account of this unique society, this masterful sway, I must refer the reader to the seventy pages of Stevenson's own description, which were the part of his diary least disappointing to himself. It could hardly be told in fewer words, and extracts can do it no justice. It is the more valuable in that it represents a state of things which is gone for ever. Only five years later, when I visited the island in 1894,

all was changed. Tembinok' was dead, the Gilbert Islands had been annexed by Great Britain, and a boy was king under the direction of a British Resident. How severe the old discipline had been was proclaimed by a large "speak-house" at Tuagana, some two hours' sail down the coast, where all round the interior of the house, at the end of the roof-beams, there had been a set of eight-and-forty human skulls, of which I saw nearly twenty still remaining. The house had been built by Tembinok's father, and the heads were those of malefactors, both white and native, or, at all events, of people who had caused displeasure to the king. The Stevensons had never heard of the existence of this place from Tembinok', though his father's grave was here, and here also were lying the two finest sea-going canoes in all the island.

But for the history of Tembinok', and for Stevenson's experience—how he was mesmerised for a cold by a native wizard, and how, with many searchings of conscience, he bought for Mr. Andrew Lang the devil-box of Apemama, the reader must go—and will thank me for sending him—to Stevenson's own pages. I will quote here only the king's leave-taking of his guest, and the impression which Stevenson had produced upon this wild, stern, and original nature:—

"As the time approached for our departure Tembinok' became greatly changed; a softer, more melancholy, and in particular, a more confidential man appeared in his stead. To my wife he contrived laboriously to explain that though he knew he must lose his father in the course of nature, he had not minded nor realised it till the moment came; and that

now he was to lose us, he repeated the experience. We showed fireworks one evening on the terrace. It was a heavy business; the sense of separation was in all our minds, and the talk languished. The king was specially affected, sat disconsolate on his mat, and often sighed. Of a sudden one of the wives stepped forth from a cluster, came and kissed him in silence, and silently went again. It was just such a caress as we might give to a disconsolate child, and the king received it with a child's simplicity. Presently after we said good-night and withdrew; but Tembinok' detained Mr. Osbourne, patting the mat by his side, saying: 'Sit down. I feel bad, I like talk.' 'You like some beer?' said he; and one of the wives produced a bottle. The king did not partake, but sat sighing and smoking a meerschaum pipe. 'I very sorry you go,' he said at last. 'Miss Stlevens he good man, woman he good man, boy he good man; all good man. Women he smart all the same man. My woman,' glancing towards his wives, 'he good woman, no very smart. I think Miss Stlevens he big chiep all the same cap'n man-o'-wa'. I think Miss Stlevens he rich man all the same me. All go schoona. I very sorry. My patha he go, my uncle he go, my cutcheons he go, Miss Stlevens he go; all go. You no see king cry before. King all the same man: feel bad, he cry. I very sorry."

"In the morning it was the common topic in the village that the king had wept. To me he said: 'Last night I no can 'peak: too much here,' laying his hand upon his bosom. 'Now you go away all the same my pamily. My brothers, my uncle go away.

All the same.' This was said with a dejection almost passionate. . . The same day he sent me a present of two corselets, made in the island fashion of plaited fibre, heavy and strong. One had been worn by his grandfather, one by his father, and, the gift being gratefully received, he sent me, on the return of his messengers, a third—that of his uncle. . .

"The king took us on board in his own gig, dressed for the occasion in the naval uniform. He had little to say, he refused refreshments, shook us briefly by the hand, and went ashore again. That night the palm-tops of Apemama had dipped behind the sea, and the schooner sailed solitary under the stars."

The remainder of Stevenson's notes on the Gilberts relate chiefly to the white, or, at any rate, the alien population of the group, which at that date was naturally a sort of No Man's Land—one of the last refuges for the scoundrels of the Pacific. Not that all the traders by any means were black sheep; some of them and some of the captains and mates working in those waters were decent fellows enough, but among them were thieves, murderers, and worse, patriots who showed an uncommon alacrity in changing their nationality when any man-of-war of their own Government happened to come their way. When the Gilberts were finally annexed in 1892, a labour vessel took a shipload of these gentry on board, bound for a South American republic, which, fortunately for that State, they never reached—the vessel being lost at sea with all hands.

Of the stories that were then current Stevenson collected a number, and had he been a realist, his read-

ers might have been depressed through many volumes by the gloom and squalor of these tragedies; as it was, he utilised only a little of what he had actually seen as material for the darker shadows in the romantic and spirited *Beach of Falesa.*

After returning to Butaritari, the *Equator*, with Stevenson and his party on board, left for Samoa. The trip was tedious but for the excitement of running by night between the three different positions assigned by the charts to a reef which possibly had no real existence. There were the usual squalls, in one of which, during the night, the safety of the ship depended entirely on the cutting of a rope. The foretopmast snapped across and the foresail downhaul fouled in the wreckage, but Ah Fu climbed to the top of the galley with his knife, and the position was saved. Next morning, however, the signal halyard had disappeared, nor was its loss accounted for until several weeks afterwards, when the Chinaman presented his mistress with a neat coil of the best quality of rope. He had once heard her admiring it, and took occasion of the squall and extremity of danger to procure it for her as a present.

The schooner arrived about the 7th of December at Apia, the capital and port of Upolu, the chief of the group known collectively as Samoa[1] or the Navigator Islands, which Stevenson now saw for the first time, and which he had every intention of leaving finally within two months of his arrival.

[1] The first two syllables are long: Sa-moa; similarly Vai-lima; but Fale-sa. The first A in A-pia is shorter, but the vowel-sounds throughout are as in Italian. The consonants are as in English, but g = ng. Thus Pagopago is pronounced Pangopango.

The *Equator's* charter now came to an end. Hiring a cottage in the hamlet a mile above the town, Stevenson began to collect the material necessary for those chapters which should be allotted to Samoa in his book upon the South Seas. This obtained, he proposed to start at once for Sydney, and thence proceed to England.

The Samoan record, as he anticipated from the outset, would deal chiefly with the history of the recent war, and for this he engaged in a most painstaking and—so far as I can judge—most successful judicial investigation into the actual facts and the course of events within the last few years. It is difficult for any one who has not lived hard by a South Sea "Beach" to realise how contradictory and how elusive are its rumours, and how widely removed from anything of the nature of "evidence." But into this confused mass Stevenson plunged, making inquiries of every one to whose statements he could attach any importance, American or English or German (my order is alphabetical), and invoking the aid of interpreters for native sources of information. He weighed and sifted his information with the greatest care, and I have never heard any of the main results contested which were embodied in *A Footnote to History*.

For the sake of this work he lived chiefly in Apia at the house of an American trader, Mr. H. J. Moors. He made the acquaintance of Colonel de Coëtlogon, the English consul, with whom he maintained the most friendly terms, who had been with Gordon in Khartoum; of Dr. Stuebel, the German Consul-General, perhaps the ablest and most enlightened, and

certainly not the least honourable diplomatist that the Great Powers ever sent to the South Seas; of the Rev. W. E. Clarke and other members of the London Mission, his warm friends then and in later days; and especially of the high chief Mataafa, who impressed him at once as the finest of the Samoans.

It was the only time Stevenson ever lived in Apia or its immediate suburbs, and a few words in passing should be devoted to the Beach, with which, now, more than at any time, he was brought into contact. This term, common to other South Sea islands, comprises, as I understand, every white resident in a place who has not some position that can be definitely described; in the last instance it denotes the mere beach-combers, loafers or mean whites, although most people would include in it all persons of markedly less consideration than themselves. There was much kindliness and generosity even among the lowest, and not more want of energy or of scruple than might have been expected. There was also a genial readiness to believe rumours, balanced by a willingness to think no worse of the persons against whom they were told. The number of white or half-caste residents in Apia was supposed to be about three hundred, of whom about two-thirds were British subjects, the bulk of the remainder being Germans.

At first Stevenson was not greatly struck either by the place or by the natives; the island was "far less beautiful than the Marquesas or Tahiti; a more gentle scene, gentler acclivities, a tamer face of nature; and this much aided, for the wanderer, by the great German plantations, with their countless regu-

lar avenues of palms." Nor was he "specially attracted by the people; but they are courteous; the women very attractive, and dress lovely; the men purposelike, well set up, tall, lean, and dignified."

In the end of December he made a boat expedition with Mr. Clarke some dozen miles to the east, partly on mission business, and partly on his own account to visit Tamasese, the chief whom the Germans had formerly set up as king; not long afterwards he made a similar journey to the west to Malua, where the London Mission have long had a training college for native students. It was on this latter occasion that he was first introduced to the natives by the Rev. J. E. Newell as "*Tusitala*," "*The Writer of Tales*," the name by which he was afterwards most usually known in Samoa. Here he gave an address which was translated for their benefit; and a few days later he delivered a lecture in Apia upon his travels, on behalf of a native church, Dr. Stuebel taking the chair.

From his notes made on the first expedition I draw one or two passages, descriptive of Samoan customs and of Samoan scenery, which is nowhere more beautiful than in the inlet he then visited.

Fagaloa, Dec. 31st.

"Past Falefā where the reef ends and the coaster enters on the open sea, all prettinesses, as if they were things of shelter, end. The hills are higher and more imminent, and here and there display naked crags. The surf beats on bluff rocks, still overhung with forest; the boat, still navigated foolishly near the broken water, is twisted to and fro with a drunken

motion, in the backwash and broken water of the surf; and though to-day it is exceptionally smooth, another boat that crosses us appears only at intervals and for a moment on the blue crest of the swells. At last, rounding a long spit of rocks on which the sea runs wildly high, the bay, gulf, or rather (as the one true descriptive word) the loch of Fagaloa opens. With a new song struck up, we begin to enter the enchanted bay; high clouds hover upon the hilltops; thin cataracts whiten lower down along the front of the hills; all the rest is precipitous forest, dark with the intensity of green, save where the palms shine silver in the thicket; it is indeed a place to enter with a song upon our lips.

" . . . . Fagaloa is the original spot where every prospect pleases. It was beautiful to see a vast black rain squall engulf the bottom of the bay, pass over with glittering skirts, climb the opposite hill, and cling there and dwindle into rags of snowy cloud; beautiful too was a scene, where a little burn ran into the sea between groups of cocos and below a rustic bridge of palm-stems; something indescribably Japanese in the scene suggested the idea of setting on the bridge three gorgeously habited young girls, and these relieved in their bright raiment against the blue of the sky and the low sea-line completed the suggestion; it was a crape picture in the fact. We went on further to the end of the bay, where the village sits almost sprayed upon by waterfalls among its palm-grove, and round under the rocky promontory, by a broken path of rock among the bowers of foliage; a troop of little lads accompanied our progress, and two of them pos-

sessed themselves of my hands and trotted alongside of me with endless, incomprehensible conversation; both tried continually to pull the rings off my fingers; one carried my shoes and stockings, and proudly reminded me of the fact at every stoppage. They were unpleasant, cheeky, ugly urchins; and the shoe-bearer, when we turned the corner and sat down in the shade and the sea-breeze on black ledges of volcanic rock, splashed by the sea, nestled up to my side and sat pawing me like an old acquaintance. . . ."

But Stevenson was now to take a step that proved more decisive than for the moment he imagined. The winter home he had once projected at Madeira was to be transferred to Samoa; he purchased some three hundred acres in the bush, three miles behind and six hundred feet above the level of the town of Apia. The ground was covered, not exactly with virgin forest, for it had formerly been occupied (according to tradition) by a Samoan bush town—but with vegetation so dense that on her first visit his wife had been quite unable to penetrate to the spot where the house afterwards stood. The land, however, was to be cleared, and a cottage erected, which would at any rate shelter the family during such intervals between their cruises as it should suit them to spend in Samoa. But the real reason for the selection of this island for a settlement, lay principally in the facilities of communication. In the matter of mails, Samoa was exceptionally fortunate. The monthly steamers between Sydney and San Francisco received and deposited their mail-bags in passing, and very soon after began to call at the port of Apia. A German steamer,

the *Lübeck*, ran regularly between Apia and Sydney, and the New Zealand boat, the *Richmond*, called on her circular trip from Auckland to Tahiti.

So the ground was bought, the money paid, and orders were left to begin the necessary operations. Early in February the party sailed for Sydney, where Mrs. Strong was now waiting to see them on their way home to England for the summer.

Soon after reaching Australia, Stevenson found in a religious paper a letter from Dr. Hyde, a Presbyterian minister in Honolulu, depreciating the labours of Father Damien at Molokai, and reviving against his memory some highly unchristian and unworthy slanders. The letter was written in a spirit peculiarly calculated to rouse Stevenson's indignation, and when he heard at the same time a report which may or may not have been true, but which he, at any rate, fully believed, to the effect that a proposed memorial to Damien in London had been abandoned on account of this or some similar statement, his anger knew no bounds. He sat down and wrote the celebrated letter to Dr. Hyde, which was forthwith published in pamphlet form in Sydney, and subsequently in Edinburgh, in the *Scots Observer*. He had the courage of his opinions, and realised the risks he was taking: "I knew I was writing a libel: I thought he would bring an action; I made sure I should be ruined; I asked leave of my gallant family, and the sense that I was signing away all I possessed kept me up to high-water mark, and made me feel every insult heroic."

But in place of the news for which his friends were waiting, that he had started upon his homeward voy-

age, there came a telegram to C. Baxter on the 10th April: "Return Islands four months. Home September."

He had taken cold in Sydney, and after the lapse of eighteen months, having again started a hemorrhage, was very ill and pining for the sea. Mrs. Stevenson heard of a trading steamer about to start for "The Islands," applied for three passages, and was refused, went to the owners and was again refused, but stating inflexibly that it was a matter of life or death to her husband, she carried her point and extorted their unwilling consent.

This vessel was the steamship *Janet Nicoll*, an iron screw-steamer of about six hundred tons, chartered by Messrs. Henderson and Macfarlane, a well-known South Sea firm. There was a dock strike in Sydney at the time, but with a "blackboy" crew on board, the *Janet* got away, carrying a full complement of officers and engineers, and the trio to whom *Island Nights' Entertainments* was afterwards dedicated—Harry Henderson, one of the partners; Ben Hird, the supercargo; and "Jack" Buckland, the living original of Tommy Haddon in *The Wrecker*.

Unwelcome guests though they had been, no sooner had they started than they met with the greatest kindness and cordiality from every one on board, and when they reached Auckland the invalid was himself again. They left that port under sealed orders, but were not yet clear of the lighthouse before some fireworks, left in Buckland's berth, set his cabin on fire. The saloon was filled with dense smoke, and a rosy glow. "Let no man say I am unscientific," wrote

Stevenson. "When I ran, on the alert, out of my stateroom, and found the main cabin incarnadined with the glow of the last scene of a pantomime, I stopped dead. 'What is this?' said I. 'This ship is on fire, I see that; but why a pantomime?' And I stood and reasoned the point, until my head was so muddled with the fumes that I could not find the companion. By singular good fortune, we got the hose down in time and saved the ship, but Lloyd lost most of his clothes, and a great part of our photographs was destroyed. Fanny saw the native sailors tossing overboard a blazing trunk; she stopped them in time, and behold, it contained my manuscripts."

After this episode all went well; the steamer put in to Apia, and stayed there long enough to enable the party to visit their new property and see what progress had been made. After that she went to the east and to the north, calling at three-and-thirty low islands, including the Ellice, Gilbert and Marshall groups; their stay in almost every case was limited to a few hours, and, as Stevenson wrote on this cruise, "hackney cabs have more variety than atolls." They saw their friend King Tembinok' again, and received a welcome from him almost too pathetic to be hearty. He had been ill, and the whole island had been attacked by measles, a disaster which was apparently attributed by the victims to the sale of their "devil-box." In the centre of the big house was a circular piece of "devil-work" in the midst of a ring of white shells, and the worship of "Chench," the local deity had obviously received an impetus from recent events.

The altered conditions of navigation were a great

interest to Stevenson, and he was never weary of admiring the captain's skill in handling the steamer, one specimen of which he has recorded in the account of his first visit to a pearl-shell island, such as, to his great disappointment, he had failed to visit from Fakarava.

"Nearly two years had passed before I found myself in the trading steamer *Janet Nicoll*, heading for the entrance of Penrhyn or Tongareva. In front, the line of the atoll showed like a narrow sea wall of bare coral, where the surges broke; on either hand the tree-tops of an islet showed some way off: on one, the site of the chief village; the other, then empty, but now inhabited, and known by the ill-omened name of Molokai. We steamed through the pass and were instantly involved amidst a multiplicity of coral lumps, or horse's heads, as they are called by sailors. Through these our way meandered; we would have a horse's head athwart the bow, one astern, one upon either board; and the tortuous fairway was at times not more than twice the vessel's beam. The *Janet* was, besides, an iron ship; half the width of the Pacific severed us from the next yard of reparation; one rough contact, and our voyage might be ended, and ourselves consigned to half a year of Penrhyn. On the topgallant forecastle stood a native pilot, used to conning smaller ships, and unprepared for the resources of a steamer; his cries rang now with agony, now with wrath. The best man was at the bridge wheel; and Captain Henry, with one hand on the engine signal, one trembling towards the steersman, juggled his long ship among these dangers, with the

patient art of one fitting up a watch, with the swift decision of a general in the field. I stood by, thrilling at once with the excitement of a personal adventure and the admiration due to perfect skill.

"We were presently at anchor in a singular berth, boxed all about; our late entrance, our future exit not to be discovered; in front the lagoon, where I counted the next day upwards of thirty horses' heads in easy view; behind, the groves of the isle and the crowded houses of the village. Many boats lay there at moorings: in the verandah, folk were congregated gazing at the ship; children were swimming from the shore to board us; and from the lagoon, before a gallant breeze, other boats came skimming homeward. The boats were gay with white sails and bright paint; the men were clad in red and blue, they were garlanded with green leaves or gay with kerchiefs; and the busy, many-coloured scene was framed in the verdure of the palms and the opal of the shallow sea.

"It was a pretty picture, and its prettiest element, the coming of the children. Every here and there we saw a covey of black heads upon the water. . . . Soon they trooped up the side-ladder, a healthy, comely company of kilted children; and had soon taken post upon the after-hatch, where they sat in a double row, singing with solemn energy."

But on the whole Stevenson did not benefit greatly by the voyage. The heat of the steamer, driven before the wind, was often intolerable; he had another hemorrhage, and remained languid and unfit for work. On the return journey the *Janet* turned off to New Caledonia, and thence went direct to Sydney. Ste-

venson, however, landed at Noumea, where he spent a few days by himself, observing the French convict settlement, and learning something of the methods of dealing with natives.

He followed his wife and stepson to Sydney, whence Mr. Osbourne left for England, finally to arrange their affairs, and bring out the furniture from Skerryvore for the "yet unbuilt house on the mountain."

All idea of this journey had been given up by Stevenson himself in the course of the past voyage, and indeed, having reached Sydney, he was confined to his room in the Union Club, and left it only to return to Samoa. From this time forth, although he formed various projects, never realised, of seeing his friends, and especially Sidney Colvin, in Egypt, Honolulu, or Ceylon, he never, so far as I know, again looked forward to setting foot upon his native shores.

With his wife he left for Apia, and on their arrival they camped in gipsy fashion, in the four-roomed wooden house, which was all, except a trellised arbour, that had yet been erected on the property. Here for the next six months they lived alone with one servant, until the ground was further cleared and the permanent house built.

Into the details of Stevenson's life at this time there is no need to go; it was a period of transition, and it is sufficiently described in the *Vailima Letters*. Most of his material difficulties were crowded into it; but even from them he derived a great deal of enjoyment. There were daily working on the land a number of labourers, partly Samoans, partly natives of other

groups. After a while, as soon as the lie of the ground could be more clearly seen, the site of the new house was selected on a plateau a couple of hundred yards higher up the hill, and the building itself was begun by white carpenters.

This was the only time their food-supply ever ran at all short; but after their experiences in schooners and on low islands, they found little to complain of, as they felt that if it ever came to the worst, two miles off there was always an open restaurant. Their one servant was a German ex-steward, a feckless, kindly creature, who seemed born with two left hands, but was always ready to do his best. But the less competent the servant, the more numerous and miscellaneous were the odd jobs which devolved upon his master and mistress.

Thus in the meantime Stevenson's own work went on under great disadvantages. This was the time when he saw most of the virgin forest, and his solitary expeditions and the hours spent in weeding at the edge of the "bush" were not without effect upon his writing.

In January 1891, he left his wife in sole charge and went to Sydney to meet his mother, who was to arrive there from Scotland on her way to Samoa. The shaft of the *Lübeck* broke when she was near Fiji, at the worst of seasons and in the most dangerous of waters; but it was patched up with great skill, and, under sail and to the astonishment of the whole port, she arrived at her destination only four days late. Stevenson as usual "fell sharply sick in Sydney," but was able to go on board the *Lübeck* again and convoy his

mother to her new home. The house, after all, was not ready to receive her, and, having taken her first brief glimpse of Samoa, she returned to the Colonies for another couple of months.

Stevenson then accompanied Mr. Harold Sewall, the American Consul-General, upon a visit to Tutuila, the easternmost island of the group, now added to the territory of the United States.

Here they spent three weeks, partly by the shores of the great harbour of Pagopago, partly on an attempt to reach the islands of Manu'a in a small schooner, and partly in circumnavigating Tutuila by easy stages in a whale-boat. It was the best view Stevenson ever had of the more remote Samoans in their own homes, and the scenery and the life attracted him more than ever. Fortunately he kept a diary, from which I have taken a few characteristic passages:—

"PAGOPAGO

"The island at its highest point is nearly severed in two by the long-elbowed harbour, about half a mile in width, cased everywhere in abrupt mountain-sides. The tongue of water sleeps in perfect quiet, and laps round its continent with the flapping wavelets of a lake. The wind passes overhead; day and night overhead the scroll of trade-wind clouds is unrolled across the sky, now in vast sculptured masses, now in a thin drift of débris, singular shapes of things, protracted and deformed beasts and trees and heads and torsos of old marbles, changing, fainting, and vanish-

ing even as they flee. Below, meanwhile, the harbour lies unshaken and laps idly on its margin; its colour is green like a forest pool, bright in the shallows, dark in the midst with the reflected sides of woody mountains.

"Right in the wind's eye, and right athwart the dawn, a conspicuous mountain stands, designed like an old fort or castle, with naked cliffy sides and a green head. In the peep of the day the mass is outlined dimly; as the east fires, the sharpness of the silhouette grows definite, and through all the chinks of the high wood the red looks through, like coals through a grate. From the other end of the harbour, and at the extreme of the bay, when the sun is down and night beginning, and colours and shapes at the sea-level are already confounded in the greyness of the dusk, the same peak retains for some time a tinge of phantom rose.

"Last night I was awakened before midnight by the ship-rats which infest the shores and invade the houses, incredible for numbers and boldness. I went to the water's edge; the moon was at the zenith; vast fleecy clouds were travelling overhead, their borders frayed and extended as usual in fantastic arms and promontories. The level of their flight is not really high, it only seems so; the trade-wind although so strong in current, is but a shallow stream, and it is common to see, beyond and above its carry, other clouds faring on other and higher winds. As I looked, the skirt of a cloud touched upon the summit of Pioa, and seemed to hang and gather there, and darken as it hung. I knew the climate, fled to

shelter, and was scarce laid down again upon the mat, before the squall burst. In its decline, I heard the sound of a great bell rung at a distance; I did not think there had been a bell upon the island. I thought the hour a strange one for the ringing, but I had no doubt it was being rung on the other side at the Catholic Mission, and lay there listening and thinking, and trying to remember which of the bells of Edinburgh sounded the same note. It stopped almost with the squall. Half an hour afterwards, another shower struck upon the house and spurted awhile from the gutters of the corrugated roof; and again with its decline the bell began to sound, and from the same distance. Then I laughed at myself, and this bell resolved into an eavesdrop falling on a tin close by my head. All night long the flaws continued at brief intervals. Morning came, and showed mists on all the mountain-tops, a grey and yellow dawn, a fresh accumulation of rain imminent on the summit of Pioa, and the whole harbour scene stripped of its tropic colouring and wearing the appearance of a Scottish loch.

"And not long after, as I was writing on this page, sure enough, from the far shore a bell began indeed to ring. It has but just ceased, boats have been passing the harbour in the showers, the congregation is within now, and the mass begun. How very different stories are told by that drum of tempered iron! To the natives a new, strange, outlandish thing: to us of Europe, redolent of home; in the ear of the priests, calling up memories of French and Flemish cities, and perhaps some carved cathedral and the

pomp of celebrations; in mine, talking of the grey metropolis of the north, of a village on a stream, of vanished faces and silent tongues.

"The Bay of Oa

"We sailed a little before high-water, and came skirting for some while along a coast of classical landscapes, cliffy promontories, long sandy coves divided by semi-independent islets, and the far-withdrawing sides of the mountain, rich with every shape and shade of verdure. Nothing lacked but temples and galleys; and our own long whale-boat sped (to the sound of song) by eight nude oarsmen figured a piece of antiquity better than perhaps we thought. No road leads along this coast; we scarce saw a house; these delectable inlets lay quite desert, inviting seizure, and there was none like Keats' Endymion to hear our snowlight cadences. On a sudden we began to open the bay of Oa. At the first sight my mind was made up—the bay of Oa was the place for me. We could not enter it, we were assured; and being entered we could not land; but a little gentle insistence produced a smiling acquiescence, and the eight oars began to urge us slowly into a bay of the *Æneid*. Right overhead a conical hill arises; its top is all sheer cliff of a rosy yellow, stained with orange and purple, bristled and ivied with individual climbing trees; lower down the woods are massed; lower again the rock crops out in a steep buttress, which divides the arc of beach. The boat was eased in, we landed and turned this way and that like fools in a perplexity of pleasures;

now some way into the wood towards the spire, but the woods had soon strangled the path—in the Samoan phrase, the way was dead—and we began to flounder in impenetrable bush. Now along the beach; it was grown upon with crooked, thick-leaved trees down to the water's edge. Our landing and the bay itself had nearly turned my head. 'Here are the works of all the poets *passim*,' I said, and just then my companion stopped. 'Behold an omen,' said he, and pointed. It was a sight I had heard of before in the islands, but not seen: a little tree such as grows sometimes on infinitesimal islets on the reef, almost stripped of its leaves, and covered instead with feasting butterflies. These, as we drew near, arose and hovered in a cloud of lilac and silver-grey. . . .

"All night the crickets sang with a clear trill of silver; all night the sea filled the hollow of the bay with varying utterance; now sounding continuous like a millweir, now (perhaps from further off) with swells and silences. I went wandering on the beach, when the tide was low. I went round the tree before our boys had stirred. It was the first clear grey of the morning; and I could see them lie, each in his place, enmeshed from head to foot in his unfolded kilt. The Highlander with his belted plaid, the Samoan with his lavalava, each sleep in their one vesture unfolded. One boy, who slept in the open under the trees, had made his pillow of a smouldering brand, doubtless for the convenience of a midnight cigarette; all night the flame had crept nearer, and as he lay there, wrapped like an oriental woman, and still

plunged in sleep, the redness was within two handbreadths of his frizzled hair.

"I had scarce bathed, had scarce begun to enjoy the fineness and the precious colours of the morning, the golden glow along the edge of the high eastern woods, the clear light on the sugar-loaf of Maugalai, the woven blue and emerald of the cone, the chuckle of morning bird-song that filled the valley of the woods when upon a sudden a draught of wind came from the leeward and the highlands of the isle, rain rattled on the tossing woods; the pride of the morning had come early, and from an unlooked-for side. I fled for refuge in the shed; but such of our boys as were awake stirred not in the least; they sat where they were, perched among the scattered boxes of our camp, and puffed at their stubborn cigarettes, and crouched a little in the slanting shower. So good a thing it is to wear few clothes. I, who was largely unclad—a pair of serge trowsers, a singlet, woollen socks, and canvas shoes; think of it—envied them in their light array.

"*Thursday.*—The others withdrew to the next village. Meanwhile I had Virgil's bay all the morning to myself, and feasted on solitude, and overhanging woods, and the retiring sea. The quiet was only broken by the hoarse cooing of wild pigeons up the valley, and certain inroads of capricious winds that found a way hence and thence down the hillside and set the palms clattering; my enjoyment only disturbed by clouds of dull, voracious, spotted, and not particularly envenomed mosquitoes. When I was still, I kept Buhac powder burning by me on a stone

under the shed, and read Livy, and confused to-day and two thousand years ago, and wondered in which of these epochs I was flourishing at that moment; and then I would stroll out, and see the rocks and the woods, and the arcs of beaches, curved like a whorl in a fair woman's ear, and huge ancient trees, jutting high overhead out of the hanging forest, and feel the place at least belonged to the age of fable, and awaited Æneas and his battered fleets.

"Showers fell often in the night; some sounding from far off like a cataract, some striking the house, but not a drop came in. . . . At night a cry of a wild cat-like creature in the bush. Far up on the hill one golden tree; they say it is a wild cocoa-nut: I know it is not, they must know so too; and this leaves me free to think it sprang from the gold bough of Proserpine.

"The morning was all in blue; the sea blue, blue inshore upon the shallows, only the blue was nameless; the horizon clouds a blue like a fine pale porcelain, the sky behind them a pale lemon faintly warmed with orange. Much that one sees in the tropics is in water-colours, but this was in water-colours by a young lady."

The mention of Livy on the last page recalls a curious circumstance, and raises besides the question of Stevenson's classical studies.

A year or two later he told me that he had read several books of Livy at this time, but found the style influencing him to such an extent that he resolved to read no more, just as in earlier days he had been

driven to abandon Carlyle. Mr. Gosse has recorded that Walter Pater in turn refused to read Stevenson lest the individuality of his own style might be affected, but it is more curious to find Stevenson himself at so late a stage fearing the influences of a Latin author.

As to his classics, he was ignorant of Greek, and preferred the baldest of Bohn's translations to more literary versions that might come between him and the originals. His whole relation to Latin, however, was very curious and interesting. He had never mastered the grammar of the language, and to the end made the most elementary mistakes. Nevertheless, he had a keen appreciation of the best authors, and, indeed, I am not sure that Virgil was not more to him than any other poet, ancient or modern. From all the qualities of the pedant he was, of course, entirely free. Just as he wrote Scots as well as he was able, "not caring if it hailed from Lauderdale or Angus, from the Mearns or Galloway," but if he had ever heard a good word, he "used it without shame," so it was with his Latin. Technicalities of law and the vocabulary of Ducange were admitted to equal rights with authors of the Golden Age.

Latin no doubt told for much in the dignity and compression of his style, and in itself it was to him—as we see in his diary—always a living language. But as an influence, Rome counted to him as something very much more than a literature—a whole system of law and empire.

From this expedition he returned to Apia in an open boat, a twenty-eight hours' voyage of sixty-five

miles, on which schooners have before now been lost. But for the journey and the exposure Stevenson was none the worse. "It is like a fairy-story that I should have recovered liberty and strength, and should go round again among my fellow-men, boating, riding, bathing, toiling hard with a wood-knife in the forest."

Before the end of April the family were installed in the new house, and in May they were reinforced not only by the elder Mrs. Stevenson, but also by Mrs. Strong and her boy from Sydney, who thenceforward remained under Stevenson's protecting care.

His wanderings were now at an end, and he was to enter upon a period of settled residence. Stevenson has been generally regarded as a tourist and an outside observer in Samoa, especially by those who least knew the Pacific themselves. It must always be borne in mind that before Stevenson settled down for the last three and a half years of his life in his house of Vailima, he had spent an almost equal length of time in visiting other islands in the Pacific. On his travels he enjoyed exceptional opportunities of gathering information, and in general knowledge of the South Seas, and of Samoa in particular, he was probably at the time of his death rivalled by no more than two or three persons of anything like his education or intelligence.

CHAPTER XV

VAILIMA—1891-94

"We thank Thee for this place in which we dwell; for the love that unites us; for the peace accorded to us this day, for the hope with which we expect the morrow; for the health, the work, the food, and the bright skies that make our lives delightful; for our friends in all parts of the earth and our friendly helpers in this foreign isle. . . . Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind. Spare to us our friends, soften to us our enemies. Bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavours. If it may not, give us strength to encounter that which is to come, that we be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath, and in all changes of fortune and down to the gates of death, loyal and loving one to another."—R. L. S., *Vailima Prayers*.

THE new house and the augmentation of his household marked the definite change in Stevenson's life, which now assumed the character that it preserved until the end. In private his material comfort was increased, and he was delivered from most of the interruptions to which his work had lately been subject; in public it now became manifest that he was to be a permanent resident in Samoa, enjoying all the advantages of wealth and fame, and the consideration conferred by numerous retainers.

To the world of his readers, and to many who never read his books, his position became one of extreme interest. He was now living, as the legend went, among the wildest of savages, who were clearly either always at war or circulating reports of wars immedi-

tely to come; settled in a house, the splendour and uxury of which were much exaggerated by rumour; lwelling in a climate which was associated with all he glories of tropic scenery and vegetation, and also, n the minds of his countrymen at all events, with a remendous cataclysm of the elements, from which he British navy had emerged with triumph. It was ittle wonder that, as Mr. Gosse wrote to him, "Since Byron was in Greece, nothing has appealed to the ordinary literary man so much as that you should be iving in the South Seas."

The island of Upolu on which Stevenson lived was he central and most important of the three principal slands composing the group to which the collective name of Samoa is applied. It is some five-and-forty miles in length and about eleven in average breadth. The interior is densely wooded, and a central range of hills runs from east to west. Apia, the chief town, is situated about the centre of the north coast, and it was on the hills about three miles inland that Stevenson made his home.

The house and clearing lay on the western edge of a tongue of land several hundred yards in width, situated between two streams, from the westernmost of which the steep side of Vaea Mountain, covered with forest, rises to a height of thirteen hundred feet above the sea. On the east, beyond Stevenson's boundary, the ground fell away rapidly into the deep valley of the Vaisigano, the principal river of the island. On the other hand, the western stream, formed by the junction of several smaller water-courses above, ran within Stevenson's own ground, and, not far below

the house, plunged over a barrier of rock with a fall of about twelve feet into a delightful pool, just deep enough for bathing and arched over with orange-trees. A few hundred yards lower down it crossed his line with an abrupt descent of forty or fifty feet. It was from this stream and its four chief tributaries that Stevenson gave to the property the Samoan name of Vailima, or Five Waters.

The place itself lay, as has been said, some three miles from the coast, and nearly six hundred feet above sea-level. From the town a good carriage-road, a mile in length, led to the native village of Tanugamanono, where the Stevensons had lodged upon their first arrival. Beyond that point a road was afterwards made, but for a time there was nothing but the roughest of footpaths, which led across the hills to the other side of the island through a forest region wholly uninhabited, all the native villages being either by the sea, or within a short distance of the coast.

East and west and south of the clearing the land was covered with thick bush, containing many scattered lofty forest trees, like those judiciously spared by the axemen where they did not endanger the new house. Here and there in the forest was a great banyan with branching roots, covering many square yards of surface, and affording a resting-place for the flying-foxes, the great fruit-eating bats, which sally forth at dusk with slow, heavy flight, like a straggling company of rooks, making for the coast. Even to the north, most of the ground between Vailima and Apia had to some extent been cultivated, yet along

the "road" the trees grew close and high, and on a dark night the phosphorescence gleamed on fallen logs amid the undergrowth, twinkling and flickering to and fro, like the hasty footsteps of the witches the Samoans believed it to be. On the estate itself the route lay by the lane of limes, a rugged, narrow, winding path, that seemed, as Stevenson said, "almost as if it was leading to Lyonesse, and you might see the head and shoulders of a giant looking in." But this part of the track was afterwards cut off by the Ala Loto Alofa, the Road of the Loving Heart, built by the Mataafa chiefs in return for Tusitala's kindness to them in prison.

The house of Vailima was built of wood throughout, painted a dark green outside, with a red roof of corrugated iron, on which the heavy rain sounded like thunder as it fell and ran off to be stored for household purposes in the large iron tanks. The building finally consisted of two blocks of equal size, placed, if I may use a military phrase in this connection, in échelon. It was the great defect of the house in its master's eyes that from a strategical point of view it was not defensible. It fulfilled, however, many of the requirements both of structure and more especially of position which he had laid down for his ideal house.

After December 1892 the downstairs accommodation consisted of three rooms, a bath, a storeroom and cellars below, with five bedrooms and the library upstairs. On the ground-floor, a verandah, twelve feet deep, ran in front of the whole house and along one side of it. Originally there had been a similar gal-

lery above in front of the library, but it so darkened that room as to make it almost useless for working. Stevenson then had half of the open space boarded in, and used it as his own bedroom and study, the remainder of the verandah being sheltered, when necessary, by Chinese blinds. The new room was thus a sort of martin's nest, plastered as it were upon the outside of the house; but except for being somewhat hot in the middle of the day, it served its purpose to perfection. A small bedstead, a couple of bookcases, a plain deal kitchen table and two chairs were all its furniture, and two or three favourite Piranesi etchings and some illustrations of Stevenson's own works hung upon the walls. At one side was a locked rack containing half-a-dozen Colt's rifles for the service of the family in case they should ever be required. One door opened into the library, the other into the verandah: one window, having from its elevation the best view the house afforded, looked across the lawns and pasture, over the tree-tops, out to the sapphire sea, while the other was faced by the abrupt slope of Vaea. The library was lined with books, the covers of which had all been varnished to protect them from the climate. The most important divisions were the shelves allotted to the history of Scotland, to French books either modern or relating to the fifteenth century, to military history, and to books relating to the Pacific.

At this height the beat of the surf was plainly to be heard, but soothing to the ear and far away; other noises there were none but the occasional note of a bird, a cry from the boys at work, or the crash of a falling tree. The sound of wheels or the din of ma-

linery was hardly known in the island: about the ouse all went barefoot, and scarcely in the world ould there be found among the dwellings of men a eeper silence than in Stevenson's house in the forest. The chief feature within was the large hall that ccupied the whole of the ground-floor of the newer ortion of the house—a room some fifty feet long and erhaps five and thirty wide, lined and ceiled with arnished redwood from California. Here the marle bust of old Robert Stevenson twinkled with approval upon many a curiously combined company, hile a couple of Burmese gilded idols guarded the wo posts of the big staircase leading directly from ne room to the upper floor. An old Samoan chief, eing one day at his own request shown over the ouse, and having seen many marvels of civilisation f which he had never dreamed, showed no sign of nterest, far less of amazement, but as he was departng he looked over his shoulder at the two Buddhas nd asked indifferently: "Are they alive?" In one orner was built a large safe, which, being continually eplenished from Apia, rarely contained any large mount of money at a time, but was supposed by the atives to be the prison of the Bottle Imp, the source f all Stevenson's fortune. In this room hung J. S. argent's portrait of Stevenson and his wife, Sir George Reid's portrait of Thomas Stevenson, two reuted Hogarths which the old gentleman had picked p, two or three of R. A. M. Stevenson's best works, picture of horses by Mr. Arthur Lemon, and—reatly to the scandal of native visitors—a plaster roup by Rodin.

In front of the house lay a smooth green lawn of couch-grass, used for tennis or croquet, and bounded on two sides by a hibiscus hedge which, within a few months of its planting, was already six feet high and a mass of scarlet double blossoms—the favourite flowers of the Samoan.

Immediately behind the mansion lay the wooden kitchen and a native house for the cook. A hundred yards to one side the original cottage in which Stevenson first lived had been re-erected, to serve upstairs as bedrooms for Mr. Osbourne and myself, downstairs for the house boys (*i. e.*, servants), for stores, tool-house, and harness-room.

Upon the other side another native house lay, halfway towards the stream. The ground below the home fence was all used for pasture; in front, the milking-shed occupied the site of the old house; and the pig-pen, impregnably fenced with barbed wire, lay a couple of hundred yards in the rear. At the back also were the old, disused stables, for in later days the horses were always kept out at grass in the various paddocks, coming up for their feed of corn every morning and evening.[1]

[1] About 1898, Mrs. Stevenson, being unable to live in Samoa, sold to Mr. Kunst, the well-known financier of Vladivostok, the house and land of Vailima, reserving only the summit of Vaea. In 1900 the islands of Upolu and Savaii passed to Germany by treaty, and after Mr. Kunst's death Vailima was acquired by the German Government and was used as the governor's residence, a purpose for which it was, perhaps, better suited than any other house in the island. The trees and lawns, however, and the internal appearance of the house had, I understand, been a good deal changed by the beginning of 1914. It is sincerely to be hoped that the outrage of making a highroad to the tomb, and rendering it a picnic resort, will never be tolerated.

On August 29, 1914, less than a month after the opening of the

But even when the house itself was provided, its service was the great difficulty. Competent and willing white helpers were not to be procured, and though there were many natives employed in Apia, yet Samoa, less fortunate than India, possessed no class of servants ready to minister to a white master with skill and devotion for a trifling wage.

At first Stevenson tried European and colonial servants. Two German men cooks passed through his kitchen: a Sydney lady's-maid brought dissensions into the household: a white overseer and three white carters came and left, causing various degrees of dissatisfaction. Then Mrs. Stevenson went away for a change to Fiji; in her absence the family made a clean sweep of the establishment, and Mrs. Strong and her brother took the entire charge of the kitchen into their own hands with complete success. This was of necessity a passing expedient. One day, however, Mr. Osbourne found a Samoan lad, with a hibiscus flower behind his ear, sitting on an empty packing-case beside the cook-house. He had come, it seemed, to collect half a dollar which the native

Great War, the German Governor of Samoa surrendered to an expeditionary force despatched by the government of New Zealand, which thereupon without bloodshed took control of the islands of Upolu and Savaii.

The island of Tutuila, with the fine deep-water harbour of Pagopago (see p. 275), was ceded to the United States in 1900, and an American governor and staff have ever since been in residence. Their kindly and intelligent treatment of the natives appears to have won the affection of the Samoans.

After Mrs. Stevenson left the islands, she made her home in California, first in San Francisco, and at a ranch at Gilroy, and later at Santa Barbara. She survived her husband nearly twenty years and died ("Alas, that she is dead!") on February 20, 1914.

overseer owed him, and he was quite content to wait for several hours until his debtor should return. In the meantime he was brought into the kitchen, and then and there initiated into the secrets of the white man's cookery. He was amused, interested, fascinated, and he plunged enthusiastically into the mysteries of his future profession. Fortunately in Samoa cookery was regarded as an art worthy of men's hands, and was practised even by high chiefs. The new-comer showed great aptitude; Mr. Osbourne persuaded him to stay, sent for his chest, and for several days would hardly let him out of his sight. So from that time forth Ta'alolo was head cook of Vailima, soon having a 'boy' under him as scullion, taking only a few occasional holidays, and perfecting his art by visits to the kitchen of the French priests. In time he brought into the household several of his relations who were Catholics like himself, and proved the best and most trustworthy of all the boys.

A very few days after my first arrival one of these new-comers appeared in the character of assistant table-boy, a clumsy, half-developed, rather rustic youth, who of course knew no English, a sign that he was at any rate free from the tricks of the Apia-bred rascal. At the first, Sosimo seemed unlikely material, but there was a certain seriousness and resolution about him which quickly produced their effect. He soon became known as "The Butler," and before long was promoted to be head boy in the pantry. From the beginning he attached himself to Tusitala with a whole-hearted allegiance. He waited on him hand and foot, looked scrupulously after his clothes, de-

voted special attention to his pony "Jack," and made one of the most trustworthy and efficient servants I have ever known. When the end came, few if any showed as much feeling as Sosimo, and his loyalty to his master's memory lasted to the end of his own life.

These two men were the best; but as I write, I recall Leuelu, and Mitaele, and Iopu, and old Lafaele, and many more, not all such good servants, not all so loyal or so honest as those first named, but all with many solid merits, many pleasing traits, and a genuine personal devotion to Tusitala which pleased him as much as many more brilliant qualities.

The table was fully provided with white napery and silver and glass according to the usual English custom, as it had prevailed in the house of Stevenson's father. The cookery was eclectic and comprised such English and American dishes as could be obtained or imitated, together with any native food which was found palatable. Of the supplies I shall speak later: it was the contrast between table and servants that was most striking. Nothing could have been more picturesque than to sit at an ordinary modern dinner-table and be waited on skilfully by a noble barbarian with perfect dignity and grace of carriage and manners hardly to be surpassed, who yet, if the weather were warm and the occasion ordinary, had for all his clothing a sheet of calico, in which his tattooed waist and loins alone were draped.

The actual house-servants were usually about half a dozen in number, two in the kitchen, two or three for house and table service; one, Mrs. Stevenson's special boy, for the garden and her own general ser-

vice, and one more to take charge of the cows and pigs. Besides these, there was always a band of outside labourers under a native overseer supervised by Mr. Osbourne, working on the plantation, varying in number, according to the amount of clearing in hand, from half-a-dozen to twenty or thirty men. The signal for beginning and leaving off their work was always given by blowing the "*pu*," a large conch shell, that made a great booming sound that could be heard in the farthest recesses of the plantation.

The great fear of the householder in Samoa used to be the dread of war, lest he should wake one morning and find that all his servants had been ordered out on service by their respective chiefs. By Stevenson's intervention the Vailima household staff was generally kept at home, but the plantation was several times deserted and had to await the restoration of peace.

The government of the household was as far as possible on the clan system. "It is something of your own doing," Stevenson had written to his mother from Bournemouth in 1886, "if I take a somewhat feudal view of our relation to servants. . . . The Nemesis of the bourgeois who has chosen to shut out his servants—his "family" in the old Scotch sense—from all intimacy and share in the pleasures of the house, attends us at every turn. An impossible relation is created, and brings confusion to all."

If this were his attitude among the artificial conditions of England, he was not likely to adopt a more modern position in Samoa, where the patriarchal stage of society still prevailed. Accordingly from the

first he used all opportunities to consolidate the household as a family, in which the boys should take as much pride and feel as much common interest as possible. His ideal was to maintain the relation of a Highland chief to his clan, such as it existed before the '45, since this seemed to approach most nearly to the actual state of things in Samoa at the time, and best met the difficulties which beset the relations of master and servant in his own day. He adopted the Stuart tartan for the Vailima kilt, to be worn on high days and holidays; he encouraged the boys to seek his help and advice on all matters and was specially delighted when they preferred to him such requests as to grant his permission to a marriage.

It must not, however, be supposed that they were allowed their own way, or indulged when they misbehaved themselves. On such occasions the whole household would be summoned, a sort of "bed of justice" would be held, and sharp reprimands and fines inflicted.

Even with all these servants, the white man was separated from the material crises of life by a somewhat thin barrier, for even the best and most responsible natives were at times brought face to face with emergencies beyond their powers, and had to fall back upon their master's help. Such occasions of course befell Stevenson most frequently in the early days when he was living in the cottage with his wife and the white cook. Much of his time was then taken up unexpectedly with such pieces of business as may be found in the first pages of the *Vailima Letters*: in measuring land, rubbing down foundered

cart-horses, ejecting stray horses during the night or wandering pigs during the day, or even in little household tasks which no one else was available to discharge. In later days his wife and all the family were able jealously to prevent such encroachments on his time, but during the last two years I can remember the master of the house himself helping with delight to feed a refractory calf that refused the bottle, driving out an angry bull, or doctoring stray natives suffering from acute colic or wounded feet, to say nothing of chance hours spent in planting or in weeding the cacao.

One morning's work stands out conspicuously in my memory. A hogshead of claret had, after many misadventures, arrived from Bordeaux slightly broached, so that it had to be bottled immediately. Stevenson feared the effect of the fumes even of the light wine upon the natives, so he himself with our aid undertook the work. The boys were sent off to the stream with relays of bottles to wash while we tapped the cask, and the red wine flowed all the morning into jugs and basins beneath. It was poured away into the bottles, and they were corked and dipped into a large pot of green sealing-wax kept simmering on the kitchen fire. There seemed not to be any fumes to affect us, but the anticipation, and the pressure to get done, the novelty of the work, and, above all, Stevenson's contagious enthusiasm, produced a great feeling of delight and exhilaration, and made a regular vintage festival of the day. Stevenson was in his glory, as he always was when he felt that he was doing manual task, and, above all, when he was able to

work in concert with others, and give his love of camaraderie full scope.

And throughout his life, for Stevenson to throw himself into any employment which could kindle his imagination was to see him transfigured. The little boy who told himself stories about his football came to weed in Samoa, and was there ever such an account of weeding since the world began? He drove stray horses to the pound, and it became a Border foray. He held an inquiry into the theft of a pig, and he bore himself as if he were the Lord President in the Inner House. But on the memorable day when he and I rode through the outposts of Mataafa's troops, and for the first time in his life Louis saw armed men actually taking the field, even his own words hardly serve to express his exhilaration and outburst of spirit: "So home a little before six, in a dashing squall of rain, to a bowl of kava and dinner. But the impression on our minds was extraordinary; the sight of that picket at the ford, and those ardent, happy faces, whirls in my head; the old aboriginal awoke in both of us and nickered like a stallion. . . . War is a huge *entraînement;* there is no other temptation to be compared to it, not one. We were all wet, we had been about five hours in the saddle, mostly riding hard; and we came home like schoolboys, with such a lightness of spirits, and I am sure such a brightness of eye, as you could have lit a candle at."

When any special entertainment was to be given, a dinner-party or a large luncheon, the whole family of course set to work to see that everything was properly done. Some saw to the decoration of the table

or the polishing of the silver, or the blending of the preliminary "cocktail"; Stevenson loved to devote himself to the special cleaning of what he called in the Scots phrase "the crystal," and his use of the glass-cloth on decanter and wine-glasses would have rejoiced the heart of an expert.

As for the food, when there was a large household to be supplied and a daily delivery from Apia had been arranged, there was no great difficulty in catering, apart from the expense. The meat came from the butcher, and the bread from the baker, the groceries, if needed, from the grocer, and the washing from the washerwoman, as in less romantic communities. There was a large storeroom, plentifully supplied from the Colonies and from home. There were generally three or four cows in milk, and a supply of pigs and chickens being reared for the table. The herd of wild cattle sold with the estate certainly did not exist within many miles of its boundaries, though I have seen tracks which showed that the animals were not mythical but led a real existence in another part of the island, whither they had betaken themselves. But if there were no four-footed creatures, birds were plentiful. Large pigeons were brought in from the surrounding woods, especially at the season when they had been feeding on the wild nutmeg-trees. The only game to be obtained was an occasional mallard, a rail, or a gallinule, unless the *manume'a* be reckoned, the one surviving species of dodo, a bird about the size of a small moorhen, which has only recovered its present feeble powers of flight since cats were introduced into the island. I have found it in

the woods above Vailima, but we never shot it ourselves, and its dark flesh was as rare upon the table as it was delicious. Prawns came from the stream, and now and again some sea-fish might be sent up from the coast, where it was abundant. Vegetables were hardly to be bought, but a piece of swampy ground half a mile from the house was turned into a patch for taro, the finest of all substitutes for the potato. Bananas and bread-fruit-trees were planted, and Mrs. Stevenson developed under her own supervision a garden in which all sorts of new plants were tried, and most of them successfully adopted. Cocoanuts, oranges, guavas, and mangoes grew already on the estate or in a paddock just below, which was taken on lease; and many more of the most improved kinds of these trees were planted and throve. The common hedges on the estate were composed of limes, the fruit being so abundant that it was used to scour the kitchen floors and tables, and citrons were of so little account that they rotted on the trees. Several acres were planted with pineapples, which, after only a little cultivation, equalled the best varieties of their kind. There was also an unrivalled plantation of kava, the shrub whose powdered root yields the Samoan national drink. Wherever the ground was cleared, the papaw or mummy-apple at once sprang up and bore its wholesome and insipid fruit. Cape gooseberries were mere weeds; soursops, the large granadillas and avocado pears, lemons and plums, egg-plants and sweet potatoes all did well in that rich volcanic soil and that marvellous climate. Nothing failed of tropical products except the ambrosial man-

gosteen, the capricious child of the Malay Peninsula. The cacao, of which frequent mention is made in the *Vailima Letters*, grew and came into bearing; but the broken and rocky surface of the ground made it difficult to keep clean, and also caused the plantation to be very straggling and irregular.

But, in truth, if Stevenson were unfitted for a South Sea trader, he was even less likely to be the successful manager of a plantation run for his own profit. No Samoan had either need or desire to work regularly for any sum less than seven dollars a month and his food, but these wages and the amount of work rendered for them were quite incompatible with the idea of competition in the markets of the civilised world. Stevenson fed his men, paid them regularly in cash, and not in trade, and neither worked them in bad weather nor discharged them for sickness, if he thought it was brought on by exposure in the course of doing work for him. If all this be accounted only common fair dealing, he had besides an unusual measure of that generosity he has attributed to others, "such as is possible to those who practise an art, never to those who drive a trade." At any rate, the little plantation never paid its way, and never seriously promised to become self-supporting.

The temperature was generally between 85° and 90° Fahrenheit at noon, and always fell during the darkness to 70°, or less. I have never seen it at any time lower than 62° nor higher than 95° in the shade. But in the early morning the lower temperature strikes one by contrast as bitterly cold, and so acutely had Stevenson felt it in his cottage in the bush that

two large fireplaces with a brick chimney were built in the big house, though after a while they were never used. It was the contrast that was trying, even at higher temperatures. "The thermometer is only 80°," wrote Stevenson, "and it's as cold as charity here. *You* would think it warm. What makes these differences? Eighty degrees is a common temperature with us, and usually pleasant. And to-day it pricks like a half frost in a wet November." Through the dry season from April to October a fresh trade-wind blew during the day from the south-east, and during the other months, although heavy rain was more frequent, the fine days were beyond words delightful. "The morning is, ah! such a morning as you have never seen; heaven upon earth for sweetness, freshness, depth upon depth of unimaginable colour, and a huge silence broken at this moment only by the far-away murmur of the Pacific and the rich piping of a single bird."

The rainfall is said to average about one hundred and thirty inches during the year, but as five or six inches fall during a really wet twenty-four hours, it does not argue many wet days, and, moreover, showers fall freely during the so-called dry season. The climate, of course, is not bracing, but it is probably as little debilitating as that of any place lying in the same latitude and no further removed from the sea-level.

There is a total absence of tropical and malarial fevers, which must be due to the fact that the germ-bearing mosquito either does not exist, or finds no virus to convey. And this is the more remarkable,

because in the Western limits of the Pacific the fevers of New Guinea and New Britain are the deadliest of their kind.

Samoa, in common with the rest of Polynesia, is fortunate in this also, that it contains nothing more venomous than a few centipedes, and even these have been accidentally imported with merchandise.

Stevenson's ordinary manner of life was this: He would get up at six, or perhaps earlier, and begin work. From my bed in the cottage I commanded a view of his verandah, and often and often I have waked in the chill early dawn to see through the window the house with the mass of Vaea towering behind it: in the midst there would be the one spot of bright light where Tusitala, the only other person awake of all the household, was already at his labours. Down below, the monotonous beating of the surf could be heard; above, through the chill air, there rang the repeated call of the manu-iao, "the bird of dawn"—a succession of clear phrases recalling with a difference the notes at once of the thrush and of the blackbird. The sky brightened; the lamp was extinguished; the household began to stir; and about half-past six a light breakfast was taken to the master. He continued to work by himself, chiefly making notes, until Mrs. Strong, her housekeeping finished, was able to begin his writing, generally soon after eight. Then they worked till nearly noon, when the whole household met for the first time at a substantial meal of two or three courses in the large hall.

Afterwards there would be talk, or reading aloud,

or a game of piquet; a bowl of kava was always made early in the afternoon, and, having been served once, was then left in the verandah. When Austin Strong was at Vailima, his "Uncle Louis" would at some time during the day give him a history lesson, and also began to teach him French; for the boy's education was undertaken by the household at large. Later in the afternoon there might follow a visit to Apia, or a ride, or a stroll into the woods or about the plantation, or a game of croquet or tennis, until close upon six o'clock, when the dinner was served. Then followed a round game at cards, or reading, or talk as before, or music, if there were any visitor in the house able to play the piano or sing, for in the end Stevenson had altogether given up the practice of his flute. Soon after eight on an ordinary night the members of the household had generally dispersed to their rooms, to go to bed at what hour they chose. The master of the house used, I think, to do most of his reading at these times, but usually he was in bed soon after ten, if not actually before.

His own favourite exercise was riding, and though for the dozen years before he came to the Pacific he had probably never mounted a horse, he was an excellent rider. His light weight (I doubt if he ever actually weighed eight stone) served him in good stead, and Jack, the Samoan-bred pony which he bought in 1890, carried him well. The first and unflattering mention describes Jack as "a *very* plain animal, dark brown, but a good goer, and gentle, except for a habit of shying and sitting down on his tail, if he sees a basket in the road, or even a bunch of

bananas. However, he will make a very good make-shift." He reigned alone in Stevenson's affection, and, never having been mounted again, passed a peaceful old age in a friend's paddock in Upolu.

Except on the roads of the Neutral Territory and in the big German plantation, the ground was not very suitable for horses, and a dozen miles was usually the limit of an afternoon's excursion.

I have called this the ordinary mode of life, but it was subject to endless variations. If Stevenson were in a hot fit of work with a story just begun or some new episode just introduced, he could do nothing and think of nothing else, and toiled all day long; for if there were no interruptions, and no other pressing business, he would at such times return to his labours for all the afternoon and evening. On the other hand if he were ailing or disinclined for writing, he would stop work some time before luncheon. But almost at any time he was at the mercy of visitors, white or brown, and the matters which were referred to him for advice or settlement were endless. Mr. Osbourne has well described them:—

"He was consulted on every imaginable subject. . . . Government chiefs and rebels consulted him with regard to policy; political letters were brought to him to read and criticise; his native following was so widely divided in party that he was often kept better informed on current events than any one person in the country. Old gentlemen would arrive in stately procession with squealing pigs for the 'chief-house of wisdom,' and would beg advice on the capitation tax or some such subject of the hour; an

armed party would come from across the island with gifts, and a request that Tusitala would take charge of the funds of the village and buy the roof-iron for a proposed church. Parties would come to hear the latest news of the proposed disarming of the country, or to arrange a private audience with one of the officials; and poor war-worn chieftains, whose only anxiety was to join the winning side, and who wished to consult with Tusitala as to which that might be. Mr. Stevenson would sigh sometimes as he saw these stately folk crossing the lawn in single file, their attendants following behind with presents and baskets, but he never failed to meet or hear them."

During his mother's first period of residence at Vailima, Stevenson used every morning at eight to have prayers at which the whole household were present. A hymn was sung in Samoan from the Mission book, a chapter read verse by verse in English and two or three prayers were read in English, ending with the Lord's Prayer in Samoan. But it was impossible to assemble before anybody had begun work, and so much delay was caused by summoning the household from their various labours, that the practice was reserved in the end for Sunday evenings only, when a chapter of the Samoan Bible was read, Samoan hymns were sung, and a prayer, written by Stevenson himself for the purpose, was offered in English, concluding, as always, with the native version of the Lord's Prayer.

There is one feature in Stevenson's residence in Samoa which has probably never yet been mentioned, and that is the constancy with which he stayed at

home in Vailima. After his visit to Tutuila in 1891 I know of only two occasions during his life in Upolu —the two separate nights which he passed at Malie— when he did not sleep either at Apia or in his own house. This was largely a precaution for the sake of health, since there was little good accommodation outside those two places, but it entirely prevented his becoming personally acquainted with many interesting spots in the islands and many of the Samoans whom he would have been glad to meet.

Thus he never crossed the central range of his own island, the track over which passed near his house; he never visited Lanuto'o, the crater lake, set in the midst of the forest among the hills, only a dozen miles away, or the stone circle known as "The House of the Cuttle-fish," in a neighbouring glen, the crater islet of Apolima, or (to cut short my list) even any of the lovely villages along the south-western shore.

Now and again, for some special reason, generally connected with the arrival of the mail steamer, he would sleep in Apia, but on all ordinary occasions he preferred to return home. At these times he liked the lamps left burning in his absence, that he might ride up the dark road and out into the solitary and silent woods, there to find the house lighted up to welcome his return even at the dead of night.

At Vailima visitors were always coming and going. All white residents who chose to appear were made welcome. The American Chief-Justice Ide and his family; Herr Schmidt, the President; the Consuls; the Land Commissioners, especially his friend Bazett

Haggard; the Independent and Wesleyan missionaries; the French Bishop, the priests and sisters; the doctor, the magistrate, the postmaster, the surveyor; the managers of firms and their employés, English or German; and traders from all parts of the islands: such were some of the residents who might arrive at any time. To them might be added passing visitors, spending a week or two in Samoa between two steamers, or remaining several months to see the islands more thoroughly. The latter, if not actually staying in the house, were yet sure to be frequently invited to Vailima. J. M. Barrie and Rudyard Kipling, to their own bitter regret, too long deferred the visits for which their host was so eager; but of those who came, the Countess of Jersey, John Lafarge the artist, and Henry Adams the historian are the most familiar names.

And perhaps most frequent and certainly not least welcome were the officers and men of the warships, of which Apia saw only too many for her peace in those troubled days. The Germans toiled but seldom up the hill, the American vessels came rarely to the islands; but in the four years of Stevenson's residence at least eight British men-of-war entered the harbour, and one—his favourite *Curaçoa*—not only came most frequently, but stayed the longest, spending in the group seven out of the last eight months of his life. The experience which I think gave him more pleasure than any other in that time was his visit as a guest in the *Curaçoa* to the outlying islets of Manu'a.

In wardroom and gunroom some were, of course, closer friends than others, but I think there was not

an officer in the ship, from the captain to the youngest midshipman, who was not definitely a friend. The most intimate were perhaps Dr. Hoskyns, Hugo Worthington,[1] the marine officer, Lieutenant (since Captain) Eeles; but the road leading from Apia became known as the "Curaçoa track," and if any one of the officers was placed upon the sick-list, he was speedily invited to stay in the house and try the effect of the climate of Vailima. With the men also, petty officers, bluejackets, and marines, Stevenson's relations were of the happiest. "A most interesting lot of men," he wrote of another ship; "this education of boys for the Navy is making a class, wholly apart—how shall I call them?—a kind of lower-class public-school boy, well-mannered. fairly intelligent, sentimental as a sailor."

He had doubted at Honolulu if the navies of the world held such another ship as the *Cormorant*, and the answer came to his door.

There was also the merchant service: the captains and officers of the mail-steamers, both of the San Francisco vessels and the local New Zealand boats. "Captain Smith of the *Taviuni*," as Lloyd Osbourne wrote, "once paid a visit to Vailima with some friends. On his road home he passed the 'Ala Loto Alofa' on which the chiefs were then working like good fellows. He asked—and was told—the reason of their task; and the bluff, hearty old seaman at once insisted on getting off his horse and felling one of the trees himself. '*I* must be in that, too,' he said,

[1] Lieut.-Col. H. Worthington was in command of the marines on H. S. M. *Iron Duke*, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe's flagship in 1914–5

with a genuine emotion; and spent half an hour swinging an axe."

Other and stranger visitors would turn up from the various islands which the family had visited. As Stevenson wrote to Mr. Barrie: "Another thing you must be prepared for—and that is the arrival of strange old shell-back guests out of every quarter of the island world, their mouths full of oaths for which they will punctiliously apologise; their clothes unmistakably purchased in a trade room, each probably followed by a dusky bride. These you are to expect to see hailed with acclamation and dragged in as though they were dukes and duchesses. For though we may be out of touch with 'God knows what,' we are determined to keep in touch with appearances and the Marquesas."

The bust of old Robert Stevenson, looking down upon the hall, must have been reminded again and again of the breakfasts in Baxter's Place, and his "broad-spoken, home-spun officers."

The departure of one of these old traders was most characteristic, and would, hardly, I think, occur in just the same way outside the South Seas. He had come from his island, he had made his way to Vailima and renewed his friendship; he had enjoyed himself and received such kindness and consideration as perhaps he did not often get. When he rose to take his leave, "Now don't you move," he said, "don't one of you move. Just let me take a last look of you all sitting there on that verandah, and I shall have that always to think of, when I'm away."

It was Stevenson's intimate knowledge of this class

which made him particularly anxious to heal as far as possible the unnecessary division between them and the missionaries.

His personal relations with the Protestant missionaries in Samoa were most pleasant. He was a loyal and generous friend to every man and woman among them, told them quite plainly whenever he disagreed with them or disapproved of their line of conduct, and was a most stimulating and liberal influence on their work. It is almost invidious to single out names, but the Rev. W. E. Clarke and his wife were his closest and most thorough-going friends among the residents. Outside Samoa, the Rev. George Brown, the Rev. F. E. Lawes of Savage Island, and the Rev. F. Damon of Honolulu held high places in his affection and regard; but for James Chalmers, "Tamate" of New Guinea, he felt a kind of hero-worship, a greater admiration probably than he felt for any man of modern times except Charles Gordon.

His appreciation of the Mission he showed not only by giving his influence and his money, but also by offering his services to take a Bible-class of young half-caste lads on Sunday afternoons. Nothing was more irksome to him than a periodical engagement. The boys, it is gathered, were quite impenetrable, and the process was that of cutting blocks with a razor; but for several months Stevenson held firmly to his undertaking, and in the end it was dropped only from some urgent external cause, and never resumed.

With the Catholics Stevenson was on equally pleasant, but quite different terms. His interest in Molokai, even apart from Father Damien, always made

his heart warm towards the priests and Catholic sisters; the accidental circumstance that all his best boys at Vailima belonged to the Church of Rome strengthened the connection. For the Bishop he had a real appreciation: "a superior man, much above the average of priests": "Monseigneur is not unimposing; with his white beard and his violet girdle he looks splendidly episcopal, and when our three waiting lads came one after another and kneeled before him in the big hall, and kissed his ring, it did me good for a piece of pageantry."

Of the spiritual merits of their work he was of course in no position to judge; but he always had a special admiration for the way in which they identified themselves with the natives and encouraged all native habits and traditions at all compatible with Christianity. Above all things he welcomed the fact that the influence of the chiefs was increased instead of weakened by their efforts. He agreed with them that it was better to concentrate their forces on people of rank, than to impose such a democracy as that of some of the Protestant societies, for he felt that the salvation of Samoa lay in the chiefs, and that it was unfortunate that all white influence except that of the Catholics was in the line of diminishing their authority.

Thus the priests and the sisters from the Savalalo convent were always welcome guests, and not the less from the fact that French was the usual medium of intercourse.

Besides open house at Vailima, there also were many special entertainments, both those given in the

house, and those shared with others or given by them in return in Apia. In addition to ordinary lunches or dinners, it was Stevenson's greatest delight to organise any festivity in which the natives could have a share, the entertainment of a man-of-war's band, a feast on the completion of a Samoan house, or, above all, the great banquet given in native fashion to celebrate his own birthday. In Apia public balls were not infrequent; Stevenson became a willing pupil in the hands of his stepdaughter, and thenceforward took his part in the dances with delight.

But the balls in themselves deserve a passing word, for, nowhere since the world began, can the juxtaposition of incongruous elements have reached so high a point. Almost every one in Apia, without regard for social station, was invited, and all were welcome. Diplomatists and naval officers, traders and bar-keepers, clerks and mechanics, all came; and the residents brought their wives and daughters, white, half-caste, or whole Polynesian. On one point only was etiquette inexorable—no Samoan man could hope for admission, unless some elderly and august chief were introduced as a spectator. But invitations were issued to such native girls as could dance and were otherwise suitable, and the "maid of a village" might frequently there be seen, dancing away in a native dress even more elaborate and scanty than those of her white sisters. And not only was social exclusiveness waived, but hostilities, public and private, were suspended at these remarkable entertainments. One night Stevenson found himself *vis-à-vis* with Chief-Justice Cedercrantz in a square dance, at a time

when either was eagerly compassing the removal of the other from the island. "We dance here in Apia," he wrote, "a most fearful and wonderful quadrille; I don't know where the devil they fished it from, but it is rackety and prancing and embraceatory beyond words; perhaps it is best defined in Haggard's expression of a gambado." And of his rival: "We exchanged a glance and then a grin; the man took me in his confidence; and through the remainder of that prance, we pranced for each other."

Another time, during the fiercest moments of Anglo-German animosity, Mr. Osbourne, by the adroit use of a bow and arrow, secured the hand of the German Consul's wife for a cotillon; and at a Fourth of July dance given by the American Vice-Consul, all that gentleman's enemies might have been seen joining hands and dancing round him, while they sang, "For he's a jolly good fellow." One ineffable family indeed carried out the rules of the game with so much rigour as to accept partners with whom they were not on speaking terms, and then to dance and speak not a word. But for the most part people entered readily into the spirit of the thing, and ill-will was left outside, while not only the lion and the lamb but the rival beasts of prey all frolicked happily together.

There is one difficulty to which I have not yet alluded—the question of language. Stevenson had, as he wrote, on entering the Pacific, "journeyed out of that comfortable zone of kindred languages, where the curse of Babel is so easy to be remedied," but the obstacle proved much less than he had antici-

pated. It is true that in Samoa few of the natives speak or really understand anything but their own tongue, but except for the fact that this has no analogies with any European speech, it is not very difficult to acquire for practical purposes. To it he soon addressed himself, and over the study of Samoan he spent a good deal of pains, even taking regular lessons from the Rev. S. J. Whitmee of the London Mission, the best Samoan scholar in the islands. In that language there is a special vocabulary for addressing or mentioning high chiefs, which is naturally used on all solemn occasions and in all important correspondence. Stevenson mastered this sufficiently to understand it when it was spoken well, and not only to be able to write it with facility, but even to satisfy his own fastidious requirements in composing letters. The everyday speech he used for all household purposes, and could understand it himself without difficulty. But when there came a voluble rustic from a remote district, some small chief perhaps, who sat and "barked," as his unfortunate hearer said, in either dialect about matters beyond Tusitala's ken the result was confusion. In matters of importance where it was of the highest urgency that Stevenson should not be misunderstood, a good and really trustworthy interpreter was hardly to be procured outside the Mission, and from anything approaching politics the missionaries for the most part wisely held aloof. But this difficulty was gradually solved by Mr. Osbourne, who learned both usages very thoroughly and spoke them in the end with fluency and ease.

There are few matters in which English readers

ave taken less interest than the political history of amoa, even when it was written by Stevenson himelf. Nevertheless, if I were to omit all reference o these affairs and the criticisms which Stevenson assed upon them, it would be supposed that I was etting judgment go against him by default. I thereore give only the briefest possible description of the overnment as it was from 1889 to 1894.

Throughout the period of Stevenson's residence in amoa, the government of the islands was controlled y a Treaty, entered into at Berlin in 1889, between merica, England, and Germany. Under this the ative king was recognised by these three Great owers, by whom two new white officials were also ppointed—a Chief-Justice, receiving £1200 a year ut of the Samoan treasury, and a President of the unicipal Council, who was to be paid £1000 a year y the Municipality and also act as adviser to the ing. A Land Commission of three representatives, ne appointed by each of the three Powers, was to nvestigate all equitable claims of foreigners to the wnership of land in Samoa, and after the registration f such titles as were valid, none but a native might cquire the freehold of any part of Samoan territory.

The American and German Consuls-General and the British Consul retained their jurisdiction, and preserved much of the prestige they had enjoyed in the days before the Berlin Treaty, when the Consular Board had been the chief controlling power in Samoa.

The British Consul, also, as a Deputy-Commissioner, had very despotic powers over all British sub-

jects under the Western Pacific Orders in Council issued under the Pacific Islanders' Protection Act (38 and 39 Vict. c. 51).

It is impossible to say whether the system thus founded could ever have worked satisfactorily among so many contending interests, and at so great a distance from the paramount Governments, seated at these were at Berlin, London, and Washington, even if two competent Treaty officials, possessed of experience and common sense, had been promptly sent out to the scene of their duties. But there was undue delay, the wrong men were chosen, and the system was doomed.

The Chief-Justiceship was, failing the unanimous choice of the three Powers, given by the King of Sweden to a Swedish Assistant-Judge, Mr. Conrad Cedercrantz, while Baron Senfft von Pilsach, a German Regierungs-Assessor, was appointed by the Powers to be President of the Municipal Council.

For more than two years the pair drew their salaries, and discharged what they conceived to be their duties, in a fashion which is perfectly incredible until it is studied by the "cold light of consular reports." Stevenson was finally kindled to indignation by the outrage of the dynamite—a proposal to blow up some Samoan chiefs imprisoned for a political offence of no great gravity, if any attempt were made by their people to rescue them from jail. He wrote to *The Times* a series of letters which at first were generally disbelieved, but were afterwards confirmed in every important detail that was made known.

The fight was keen, for the two Treaty officials did

heir best, as Stevenson believed, to have him deported; but the end was certain, whether it was due to the diplomatists or *The Times*, and the pair departed for other scenes of activity. But the evil had been done, and such opportunity as their successors had was frustrated by the arbitrary and vacillating interference of the consuls.

Stevenson took the chair at one public meeting in Apia, and apart from this, his local interference in politics was limited to a few formal visits to native chiefs. Once, however, by an accident it nearly took the most startling form of intervention possible. The king was all but shot dead in the large hall at Vailima by Mrs. Stevenson in her husband's presence. Suddenly one day in 1894 Malietoa came up without warning to pay a secret visit of reconciliation to Tusitala, attended only by a black-boy interpreter. In the course of the visit he happened to mention his wish for a revolver; Stevenson immediately went to the big safe in the corner of the room and produced one, which he emptied of the cartridges, and handed to his wife. Mrs. Stevenson found that there was something wrong with the trigger and tried it several times. Four times it clicked, the king leaned over in front to examine it, and then some unaccountable impulse made her inspect the pistol again. In the next chamber lay a cartridge which would inevitably have sent its charge into the king's brain. The smile and wave of the hand with which Malietoa greeted and dismissed the discovery were worthy of a stronger monarch and of a far greater kingdom. Had the bullet gone to its mark, it is idle to speculate on what

would have happened, but it is clear at any rate that Stevenson could no longer have found a home in Samoa.

On most occasions he confined himself to giving his advice when it was asked, or when he saw any reasonable chance of its being accepted. I need hardly say that he never contributed one farthing or one farthing's worth towards any arming or provisioning of the natives, nor did he ever take any step or give any counsel or hint whatsoever that could possibly have increased the danger of war or diminished the hopes of a peaceful settlement.

If he had been asked what concern he had in the affairs of Samoa, or why he did not leave them in the hands of the consuls whose business they were, he would probably have answered that it *was* his business to vindicate the truth and to check misgovernment and oppression wherever he found them; that he had good reason to distrust the consuls; that Samoa was a remote spot where public opinion was helpless; and that the trustworthy means of publishing the real state of its affairs to the civilised world were few. And in support of this he would have instanced the case of the dynamite, the very name of which has been suppressed in all the blue-books and white-books of the three Powers; and the fact that the only newspaper in the island had been secretly purchased with the public money, printing-press, type and all, for the benefit of his opponents. Finally, that which he would never have pleaded for his own advantage may be urged for him in a disinterested sense: he had adopted Samoa as his country, and her

nemies were his enemies, and he made her cause is own. It is difficult for people reading their newspapers at home to realise the entire difference of circumstances and conduct, and I freely confess that until I arrived in Samoa and saw the conditions for myself upon the spot, I favoured the easier course of *laissez faire*.

It would give a false impression, however, if I neglected to mention the excitement of politics, which in Europe is denied to all but the few diplomatists behind the scenes. In Apia every one knew the chief persons involved, both white and Samoan, and knew all, and much more than all, that was passing between them. As a young Irishman quoted by Stevenson said: "I never saw so good a place as this Apia; you can be in a new conspiracy every day." And to Stevenson himself at first the interest was absorbing: "You don't know what news is, nor what politics, nor what the life of man, till you see it on so small a scale and with your liberty on the board for stake." But so futile and so harassing were these concerns, that before long he was glad to leave them on one side as far as he could, and devote himself once more to literature. He soon found politics "the dirtiest, the most foolish, and the most random of human employments": and for the diplomatists—"You know what a French post-office or railway official is? That is the diplomatic card to the life. Dickens is not in it; caricature fails."

Of the exact amount of influence that Stevenson possessed with the natives, it is hard to speak with any certainty. From what I have said of his stationary

life it will be evident that there were many Samoans who had no opportunity of coming into contact with him at all; but in spite of this drawback his prestige and authority were gradually spreading, and his kindness and fidelity in misfortune produced a real effect upon the native mind. As Mr. Whitmee, who knew the islands well, said "There have been paragraphs in British papers representing Mr. Stevenson as being something like a king in Samoa. I believe I have seen it stated that he might have been king of the islands had he wished. That was simple nonsense." (And, I may add, nonsense which irritated Stevenson more than almost any other idle rumour.) "But he was respected by the natives as a whole, and by many he was beloved."

During these three years his work was as considerable in amount and as diverse as ever. He turned to the South Seas and wrote *The Island Nights' Entertainments*: stirred by the wrongs of Samoa, he wrote against time *A Footnote to History*.[1] He laboured long to carry out a contract with Messrs. McClure for letters on his voyages, of which in the end he sent

[1] The appeal to the Kaiser with which this book concludes should not be forgotten. "Germany has shown she can be generous; it now remains for her only to forget a natural but certainly ill-grounded prejudice. . . . The future of Samoa should be thus in the hands of a single man on whom the eyes of Europe are already fixed. It is to him—to the sovereign of the wise Stuebel and the loyal Brandeis—that I make my appeal." But the only answer was the burning of the printed but as yet unissued edition of the book in Germany, and a heavy penalty in the form of contribution to a charity, paid by Baron Tauchnitz the publisher.

ome seventy to America. The material used in these as afterwards to be embodied in a monumental book n the Pacific, but even the letters (published later s "In the South Seas") proved refractory, and the reat work was never even begun. His new experi- nces were also utilized in *The Wrecker* and *The Ebb 'ide* which had been already started in collaboration 'ith Mr. Osbourne and were now brought to a con- lusion. The *Fables*, too, begun in England, received dditions, and most of the *Songs of Travel* were writ- en in these years. But it was still in his stories of cotland that his best work was done. *St. Ives*, it is rue, was begun as a short story and never became a ood long one, but *Catriona*, written in four months, vas a spirited sequel to the fine beginning of *Kid- apped*. As usual with his work most of these books s well as *A Family of Engineers*, the history of his amily, were taken up from time to time and again aid down, while fresh schemes were always taking hape.

It so happened one afternoon at Vailima that I was he only person available, and Louis carried me off to lebate the claims of two stories which he then un- olded—one that was to be called *Sophia Scarlet*, and he other which afterwards became *Weir of Hermis- on*. Either on that day or about that time I remem- er very distinctly his saying to me: "There are, so ar as I know, three ways, and three ways only, of vriting a story. You may take a plot and fit char- cter to it, or you may take a character and choose ncidents and situations to develop it, or lastly—you nust bear with me while I try to make this clear"—

(here he made a gesture with his hand as if he were trying to shape something and give it outline and form)—"you may take a certain atmosphere and get action and persons to express and realise it. I'll give you an example—*The Merry Men.* There I began with the feeling of one of those islands on the west coast of Scotland, and I gradually developed the story to express the sentiment with which that coast affected me."

It was on this last scheme that *Sophia Scarlet* had been conceived, the atmosphere being that of a large plantation in Tahiti, such as Mr. Stewart's had been at Atimono twenty years before. It may be that the method did not lend itself readily to an effective sketch of the plot; the draft of the beginning of the story seems to me better than I thought the outline at the time. But in any case there could be no hesitation in the choice. *Weir of Hermiston* was begun, and for three or four days Stevenson was in such a seventh heaven as he has described: he worked all day and all evening, writing or talking, debating points, devising characters and incidents, ablaze with enthusiasm, and abounding with energy. No finished story was, or ever will be, so good as *Weir of Hermiston*, shown to us in those days by the light of its author's first ardour of creation.

Besides the works already mentioned, and the letters to *The Times*, as well as his private correspondence, there were endless other schemes, for the most part projected and perhaps not even begun, never, certainly, brought near to completion. He wrote to Charles Baxter: "My schemes are all in the air,

and vanish and reappear again like shapes in the clouds." So likewise to Miss Boodle: "I have a projected, entirely planned, love-story—everybody will think it dreadfully improper, I'm afraid—called *Canonmills*. And I've a vague, rosy haze before me—a love-story too, but not improper—called *The Rising Sun*. It's the name of the wayside inn where the story, or much of the story, runs; but it's a kind of a pun: it means the stirring up of a boy by falling in love, and how he rises in the estimation of a girl who despised him, though she liked him, and had befriended him; I really scarce see beyond their childhood yet, but I want to go beyond, and make each out-top the other by successions: it should be pretty and true if I could do it."

Neither of these was ever written. There was also a play for home representation, showing the adventures of an English tourist in Samoa; and I can remember two more serious schemes which were likewise without result. In the August before he died, he drew up with Mr. Osbourne the outline of a history, or of a series of the most striking episodes of the Indian Mutiny, to be written for boys, and he sent home for the books necessary for its execution. Another day he sketched the plan of an English grammar, to be illustrated by examples from the English classics. These are but a few: the many are unremembered; but all alike belong, not to the fleet of masterpieces unlaunched, but the larger and more inglorious squadron whose keels were never even laid down.

CHAPTER XVI

THE END—1894

"Brief day and bright day
And sunset red,
Early in the evening,
The stars are overhead."
R. L. S.

"*Wanted Volunteers*
To do their best for twoscore years!
A ready soldier, here I stand,
Primed for Thy command,
With burnished sword.
If this be faith, O Lord,
Help Thou mine unbelief
And be my battle brief."
Envoy to No. XXV. of *Songs of Travel.*

THE climate of Samoa had apparently answered the main purpose of preserving Stevenson from any disabling attacks of illness, and allowing him to lead a life of strenuous activity. "I do not ask for health," he had said to his stepson at Bournemouth, "but I will go anywhere and live in any place where I can enjoy the ordinary existence of a human being." And this had now been granted to him beyond his utmost hope.

In all the time he was in Samoa he had but two or three slight hemorrhages, that were cured within a very few days. The consumption in his lungs was definitely arrested, but it seems certain that a struc-

tural weakening of the arteries was slowly and inevitably going on, although his general health was apparently not affected. He had influenza at least once; occasionally he was ailing, generally with some indefinite lassitude which was attributed to malaria or some other unverifiable cause. In the summer of 1892, he was threatened with writer's cramp, which had attacked him as long ago as 1884. From this time forth, however, his stepdaughter wrote to his dictation nearly all his literary work and correspondence, and, thanks to her quickness and unwearying devotion, he suffered the least possible inconvenience from this restriction of his powers. He had one or two threatenings of tropical diseases, which were promptly averted; and for several periods, to his own intense disgust, he gave up even the very moderate quantity of red wine which seemed to be a necessity of life to him, and—worst deprivation of all—he abandoned at these times the cigarettes which usually he smoked all day long.

But in spite of these occasional lapses, he was able to lead an active life, full of varied interests, and the amount of work which he did during this period would have been satisfactory to less careful writers, even if they had done nothing else but follow their own profession without any interruption or diversion whatever.

It was his friends and his country that he missed. From the day that Sidney Colvin went down the ship's side in the Thames, or the day that Will H. Low parted from him in New York, Stevenson never again saw any one of his old and intimate companions.

Fortune was against him in the matter. They were all busy people, with many engagements and many ties, and when at last Charles Baxter was able to start for Samoa, he had not yet reached Egypt before the blow fell. Nor was this perversity of fortune confined to his old friends alone; it also affected the younger writers with whom, in spite of distance, he had formed ties more numerous, and, in proportion to their number, more intimate than have ever before been established and maintained at any such distance by correspondence alone. And it was the more tantalising, because the paths of several seemed likely to lead them past the very island where he lived. So he had to content himself as best he might with his mail-bag, which, especially in the answers to the *Vailima Letters*, did much to remove for him the drawbacks of his isolation and of absence from the centres of literature to which he always looked for praise and blame.

But, besides the loss of intercourse, he, more than most men, suffered from another pang. The love of country which is in all Scots, and beyond all others lies deepest in the Celtic heart, flowed back upon him again and again with a wave of uncontrollable emotion. When the "smell of the good, wet earth" came to him, it came "with a kind of Highland touch." A tropic shower discovered in him "a frame of mind and body that belonged to Scotland, and particularly to the neighbourhood of Callander." When he turned to his grandfather's life, he was filled with this yearning, and the beautiful sentences in which he has described the old man's farewell to "Sumburgh and the

wild crags of Skye" were his own valediction to those shores. No more was he to "see the topaz and the ruby interchange on the summit of the Bell Rock, no more to see the castle on its hill or the venerable city which he must always think of as his home." As he wrote of himself, "Like Leyden I have gone into far lands to die, not stayed like Burns to mingle in the end with Scottish soil."

It is not to be wondered that his letters show moods of depression which his indomitable spirit prevented him from manifesting at the time to those around him, and which perhaps beset him most when he turned to his correspondence. As has been well said: "He was an exile, and though his exile lay in pleasant places, he had an exile's thoughts, and these were bound to be upper-most when he wrote to his old intimates."

The difficulty of the life in Samoa was its great expense. In 1887, Stevenson had written: "Wealth is only useful for two things—a yacht and a string quartette. Except for these, I hold that £700 a year is as much as anybody can possibly want." But though he had neither the music nor the vessel, and was now making an income of six or seven times the amount mentioned, it was no more than enough to meet the cost of his living, and the needs of his generosity, while he was occasionally haunted by a fear lest his power of earning should come to an end.

During the period of his residence at Vailima he returned but twice to the world of populous cities. In the early part of 1893 he paid a visit of several weeks to Sydney, and though, as usual there, he was

much confined to his room, he derived from the trip a good deal of enjoyment. For the first time he realised that his fame had reached the Colonies, and though no man was ever under fewer illusions upon the point, he enjoyed the opportunities it gave him of meeting all sorts of people. Artists and Presbyterian ministers alike vied in entertaining him; at Government House he was just in time to see the last of Lord and Lady Jersey; and by this time there were at Sydney a number of friends in whose company he delighted, especially Dr. Fairfax Ross and the Hon. B. R. Wise. But the event which pleased and cheered him most was his meeting at Auckland with the veteran Sir George Grey, with whom he had more than one prolonged and most inspiring discussion upon the affairs of Samoa.

In September 1893, he came up with me to Honolulu for the sake of the voyage, intending to return by the next steamer. After a week spent there I left him apparently quite well, and intending to sail for Samoa the next day. But in those four-and-twenty hours he developed pneumonia, and remained ill at Waikiki until his wife's arrival, and they did not reach Apia again before November.

On his return to Samoa several events occurred which gave him great pleasure. He had never wearied in his kindness and generosity towards any of the natives who were in trouble, and he was constant in seeing to the real needs of the Mataafa chiefs who were in prison. These services he rendered to them, as he rendered all service, without thought of reward or fear of misunderstanding, and it was all the more

pleasant to him when the chiefs gave him first an elaborate native feast with full honours in the jail where they were still confined; and secondly, as soon as they were released, came as a mark of gratitude, and cleared and dug and completed the roadway which thereafter led to his house—the "Ala Loto Alofa," the Road of the Loving Heart. It took a number of men several weeks to make, and they bore the whole labour and the whole cost; it was not prompted from outside, and no ulterior motive has ever, so far as I am aware, been suggested by anybody to whom the circumstances were known. When it was finished, there was a solemn returning of thanks, and Stevenson's speech, which may be found at the end of the fourth volume of the *Letters*, was his best and most outspoken utterance to the people of Samoa.

In the end of September he wearied of *St. Ives* within sight of its conclusion, and fortunately turned again to *Weir of Hermiston*. It was the third time he had taken it in hand, for he would not work at it when he felt uncertain of himself. But his insight was at its clearest, his touch most sure, and his style, as always when he approached Scotland in his novels, was at its simplest and best. "He generally makes notes in the early morning," wrote Mrs. Strong in her diary on September 24, "which he elaborates as he reads them aloud. In *Hermiston* he has hardly more than a line or two to keep him on the track, but he never falters for a word, but gives me the sentences, with capital letters and all the stops, as clearly and steadily as though he were reading from an unseen book."

October and November passed; Stevenson remained hard at work, and to all appearance in his ordinary health. His birthday was celebrated by the usual native feast, and on Thanksgiving Day, November 29, he gave a dinner to all his American friends. What remains to tell has been so related by Mr. Osbourne that no other account is possible or to be desired.[1]

"He wrote hard all that morning of the last day; his half-finished book, *Hermiston*, he judged the best he had ever written, and the sense of successful effort made him buoyant and happy as nothing else could. In the afternoon the mail fell to be answered; not business correspondence—for this was left till later—but replies to the long, kindly letters of distant friends, received but two days since, and still bright in memory.

"At sunset he came downstairs; rallied his wife about the forebodings she could not shake off; talked of a lecturing tour to America that he was eager to make, 'as he was now so well,' and played a game at cards with her to drive away her melancholy. He said he was hungry; begged her assistance to help him make a salad for the evening meal; and to enhance the little feast, he brought up a bottle of old Burgundy from the cellar. He was helping his wife on the verandah, and gaily talking, when suddenly he put both hands to his head, and cried out, 'What's

[1] I had left Samoa five weeks before for a long cruise in the Islands, and the news first reached me in the Carolines in the following March. On November 25th we had sighted the roofs of Vailima from the sea, but the future was hidden from us, and we continued on our way.

that?' Then he asked quickly, 'Do I look strange?' Even as he did so he fell on his knees beside her. He was helped into the great hall, between his wife and his body-servant, Sosimo, losing consciousness instantly, as he lay back in the armchair that had once been his grandfather's. Little time was lost in bringing the doctors—Anderson, of the man-of-war, and his friend Dr. Funk. They looked at him and shook their heads; they laboured strenuously, and left nothing undone; but he had passed the bounds of human skill.

"The dying man lay back in the chair, breathing heavily, his family about him frenzied with grief, as they realised all hope was past. The dozen and more Samoans that formed part of the little clan of which he was chief sat in a wide semicircle on the floor, their reverent, troubled, sorrow-stricken faces all fixed upon their dying master. Some knelt on one knee, to be instantly ready for any command that might be laid upon them. A narrow bed was brought into the centre of the room, the master was gently laid upon it, his head supported by a rest, the gift of Shelley's son. Slower and slower grew his respiration, wider the interval between the long, deep breaths. The Rev. Mr. Clarke was now come, an old and valued friend, he knelt and prayed as the life ebbed away.

"He died at ten minutes past eight on Monday evening the 3rd of December, in the forty-fifth year of his age.

"The great Union Jack that flew over the house was hauled down, and laid over the body, fit shroud

for a loyal Scotsman. He lay in the hall which was ever his pride, where he had passed the gayest and most delightful hours of his life, a noble room with open stairway and mullioned windows. In it were the treasures of his far-off Scottish home; the old carved furniture, the paintings and busts that had been in his father's house before him. The Samoans passed in procession beside his bed, kneeling and kissing his hand, each in turn, before taking their places for the long night watch beside him. No entreaty could induce them to retire, to rest themselves for the painful and arduous duties of the morrow. It would show little love for Tusitala, they said, if they did not spend their last night beside him. Mournful and silent, they sat in deep dejection, poor, simple, loyal folk, fulfilling the duty they owed their chief.

"Sosimo asked, on behalf of the Roman Catholics, that they might be allowed to recite the prayers for the dead. Till midnight the solemn chants continued, the prolonged, sonorous prayers of the Church of Rome, in commingled Latin and Samoan. Later still, a chief arrived with his retainers, bringing a precious mat to wrap about the dead.

"He, too, knelt and kissed the hand of Tusitala, and took his place amid the sleepless watchers.

"The morning of the 4th of December broke cool and sunny, a beautiful day, rare at this season of the year. More fine mats were brought, until the Union Jack lay nigh concealed beneath them.

"A meeting of chiefs was held to apportion the work and divide the men into parties. Forty were sent with knives and axes to cut a path up the steep

face of the mountain, and the writer himself led another party to the summit—men chosen from the immediate family—to dig the grave on a spot where it was Mr. Stevenson's wish that he should lie. Nothing more picturesque can be imagined than the narrow ledge that forms the summit of Vaea, a place no wider than a room, and flat as a table. On either side the land descends precipitously; in front lies the vast ocean and the surf-swept reefs; to the right and left, green mountains rise, densely covered with the primeval forest. Two hundred years ago the eyes of another man turned towards that same peak of Vaea as the spot that should ultimately receive his war-worn body: Soalu, a famous chief.

"All the morning, Samoans were arriving with flowers; few of these were white, for they have not learned our foreign custom, and the room glowed with the many colours. There were no strangers on that day, no acquaintances; those only were called who would deeply feel the loss. At one o'clock a body of powerful Samoans bore away the coffin, hid beneath a tattered red ensign that had flown above his vessel in many a corner of the South Seas. A path so steep and rugged taxed their strength to the utmost, for not only was the journey difficult in itself, but extreme care was requisite to carry the coffin shoulder high.

"Half an hour later, the rest of his friends followed. It was a formidable ascent, and tried them hard. Nineteen Europeans, and some sixty Samoans, reached the summit. After a short rest, the Rev. W. E. Clarke read the burial service of the Church

of England, interposing a prayer that Mr. Stevenson had written and had read aloud to his family only the evening before his death:

> "We beseech Thee, Lord, to behold us with favour, folk of many families and nations, gathered together in the peace of this roof; weak men and women, subsisting under the covert of Thy patience.
>
> "Be patient still; suffer us yet a while longer—with our broken purposes of good, with our idle endeavours against evil—suffer us a while longer to endure, and (if it may be) help us to do better. Bless to us our extraordinary mercies; if the day come when these must be taken, have us play the man under affliction. Be with our friends; be with ourselves. Go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns, return to us, our sun and comforter, and call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts—eager to labour—eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion—and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it.
>
> "We thank Thee and praise Thee; and in the words of Him to whom this day is sacred, close our oblation.

"Another old friend, the Rev. J. E. Newell, who had risen from a sick-bed to come, made an address in the Samoan language.

"No stranger's hand touched him. It was his body-servant that interlocked his fingers and arranged his hands in the attitude of prayer. Those who loved him carried him to his last home; even the coffin was the work of an old friend. The grave was dug by his own men."

So there he was laid to rest, and in after time a large tomb in the Samoan fashion, built of great blocks of cement, was placed upon the grave. On either side there is a bronze plate: the one bearing the words in Samoan, "The Tomb of Tusitala," followed by the speech of Ruth to Naomi, taken from the Samoan Bible:

"Whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried."

At the sides of the inscription were placed a thistle and a hibiscus flower.

Upon the other panel, in English, is his own *Requiem:*

ROBERT LOUIS
1850 STEVENSON. 1894

"Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me;
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill."

After his death the chiefs tabooed the use of firearms upon the hillside where he lies, that the birds

might live there undisturbed, and raise about his grave the songs he loved so well.

The proposal that a memorial pillar should be erected on the hill, to serve as a sea-mark, was abandoned. Besides the difficulties of transport, and of keeping the summit always clear of trees, there was the real danger of the slight but frequent shocks of earthquake by which any kind of column would, sooner or later, have been overthrown.

"Thin-legged, thin-chested, slight unspeakably,
Neat-footed and weak-fingered; in his face—
Lean, large-boned, curved of beak, and touched with race,
Bold-lipped, rich-tinted, mutable as the sea,
The brown eyes radiant with vivacity—
There shines a brilliant and romantic grace,
A spirit intense and rare, with trace on trace
Of passion, impudence, and energy.
Valiant in velvet, light in ragged luck,
Most vain, most generous, sternly critical,
Buffoon and poet, lover and sensualist:
A deal of Ariel, just a streak of Puck,
Much Antony, of Hamlet most of all,
And something of the Shorter-Catechist."

A Book of Verses, p. 41, by W. E. Henley, published by D. Nutt, 1888.

Of Stevenson's personal aspect and bodily powers it may be fitting here to make mention. Of his appearance the best portraits and photographs give a fair idea, if each be considered as the rendering of only one expression. The eyes were the most striking feature of the face; they were of the deepest brown in colour, set extraordinarily wide apart. At most times they had a shy, quick glance that was most attractive,

ut when he was moved to anger or any fierce emo-
ion, they seemed literally to blaze and glow with a
iery light. His hair was fair and even yellow in col-
ur until he was five-and-twenty; after that it rapidly
leepened, and in later years was quite dark, but with-
ut any touch of black. When he reached the tropics,
nd the fear of taking cold was to some extent re-
noved, he wore it short once more, to his own great
atisfaction and comfort. His complexion was brown
nd always high, even in the confinement of the sick-
oom; the only phrase for it is the "rich-tinted" used
y W. E. Henley in the spirited and vivid lines which
e kindly permitted me to quote.

In height he was about five feet ten, slender in fig-
ure, and thin to the last degree. In all his move-
ments he was most graceful: every gesture was full of
an unconscious beauty, and his restless and supple
gait has been well compared to the pacing to and fro
of some wild forest animal. To this unusual and
most un-English grace it was principally due that he
was often taken for a foreigner. We have seen that
Mr. Lang found his appearance at three-and-twenty
like anything but that of a Scotsman, and the same
difficulty pursued Stevenson through life, more espe-
cially on the Continent of Europe. "It is a great
thing, believe me," he wrote in the *Inland Voyage*,
"to present a good normal type of the nation you be-
long to"; and, as he says in the same chapter, "I
might come from any part of the globe, it seems, ex-
cept from where I do." In France he was some-
times taken for a Frenchman from some other prov-
ince; he has recorded his imprisonment as a German

spy; and at a later date he wrote: "I have found out what is wrong with me—I look like a Pole."

His speech was distinctly marked with a Scottish intonation that seemed to every one both pleasing and appropriate, and this, when he chose, he could broaden to the widest limits of the vernacular. His voice was always of a surprising strength and resonance, even when phthisis had laid its hand most heavily upon him. It was the one gift he really possessed for the stage, and in reading aloud he was unsurpassed. In his full, rich tones there was a sympathetic quality that seemed to play directly on the heart-strings like the notes of a violin. Mrs. Stevenson wrote: "I shall never forget Louis reading Walt Whitman's *Out of the cradle endlessly rocking*, followed by *O Captain, my Captain*, to a room full of people, some of whom had said that Whitman lacked sentiment and tenderness. All alike, men and women, sat spellbound during the reading, and I have never seen any audience so deeply moved." Nor, for my part, shall I forget his rendering of the Duke of Wellington Ode on the evening after the news of Tennyson's death had arrived at Vailima.

When his attention was given to objects or persons his observation was singularly keen and accurate, but for the most part his memory for the faces of his acquaintances was positively bad. His hearing was singularly acute, although the appreciation of the exact pitch of musical notes was wanting. But between delicate shades of pronunciation he could discriminate with great precision. I can give an instance in point. The vowels in Polynesian languages

re pronounced as in Italian, and the diphthongs etain the sounds of the separate vowels, more or ess slurred together. Thus it can be understood hat the difference between *ae* and *ai* at the end of a vord in rapid conversation is of the very slightest, ınd in Samoa they are practically indistinguishable. :n the Marquesas Stevenson was able to separate .hem. At Vailima one day we were making trial of :hese and other subtleties of sound; in almost every :ase his ear was exactly correct. Nothing more shook his admiration for Herman Melville than that writer's inability to approximate to the native names of the Marquesas and Tahiti: and in his own delicate hearing lay perhaps the root of his devotion to style.

CHAPTER XVII

R. L. S.

"Who is it that says most? which can say more
Than this rich praise—that you alone are you?"

FOR any who have read the foregoing pages it should be unnecessary here to dwell upon the sources of many qualities which distinguished Stevenson throughout his life, or the degree to which they were called forth in turn or affected by the many variations of his environment. A Scot born, we have seen how Edinburgh and Swanston set the seal upon his nationality, and how from father and mother he drew diverse elements of temperament and character. We have seen the effect of his schooling, such as it was, and the prolonged leisure of his boyhood; of the influence of his friends and his reading; the results of his training as an engineer and as an advocate; of his wanderings in France, his breakdown in America, and the happiness of his married life.

In several respects it must be owned that he was fortunate. His long preludes and painful apprenticeship would clearly have proved impossible, had it been necessary for him to make money at an early age, and even the history of his maturity would have been materially changed if he had been compelled to rely solely upon his writing to meet the expenses of his household. His late beginning had, again, this advantage: tardy in some ways as he was, he had left

ehind him the ignobler elements of youth before his oice was heard or recognised. The green-sickness f immaturity was over, at the worst, only one or two ouches of self-consciousness remained, and even in is earliest published essays there rings out the note f high spirit and cheerfulness which issued from the ick-room of later years, deceived for a time the most enetrating of critics, and was perhaps the best part f his message to a world that had fallen on weary lays.

In regarding Stevenson, both as man and writer, we ind that the most unusual fact about him, was the coupling of the infinite variety of his character and ntellect, with the extraordinary degree in which he was moved by every thought and every feeling. Few men are acted upon by so wide a range of emotions and ideas; few men hold even two or three ideas, or feel even a few emotions, with nearly as much intensity as compelled him under all. When we have considered both number and degree, we shall find other gifts no less remarkable and even more characteristic —the unfailing spirit of chivalry and the combination of qualities that went to make up his peculiar and individual charm. Though it is inevitable thus to take him piecemeal and to dwell upon one side at a time to the exclusion of the others he so rapidly turned upon us, we must never allow this process to efface in our minds what is far more essential—the image of the living whole.

I. If I have failed to produce a correct impression of his intense energy, I have quoted him and written

to little purpose. The child with his "fury of play" the boy walking by himself in the black night and exulting in the consciousness of the bull's-eye beneath his coat; the lad already possessed with the invincible resolve of learning to write, which for the time overcame the desire of all other action: these were but the father of the man. So vehement were his emotions, his own breast was too small to contain them. He paid a visit at nineteen to a place he had not seen since childhood. "As I felt myself on the road at last that I had been dreaming of for these many days before, a perfect intoxication of joy took hold upon me; and I was so pleased at my own happiness that I could let none past me till I had taken them into my confidence."

It is useless to go on quoting: through life he did the thing he was doing as if it were the one thing in the world that was worth being done. I will give but one more example, premising that its essence lies in its very triviality: the smaller the matter at stake, the more surprising is the blaze of energy displayed. One day he was talking to a lady in his house at Bournemouth, at a time when he was recovering from hemorrhage, and visitors and conversation were both strictly forbidden. A book of Charles Reade's—*Griffith Gaunt*, I think—was mentioned, and nothing would serve Stevenson but that he should run to a cold room at the top of the house to get the volume. His visitor first tried to prevent it, then refused to wait for his return, and was only dissuaded from her resolve by being told (and she knew it to be true) that if he heard that she had left the house, he would certainly

n after her down the drive without waiting for ther hat or coat.

"The formal man is the slave of words," he said; ıd as a consequence of his own fiery intensity, no .an was ever less imposed upon by the formulas of :her people. His railing against the burgess, for ex- mple, was no catchword, but the inmost and original :eling of his heart. Consequently, whenever he ut- :red a commonplace, it will be usually found that he ad rediscovered the truth of it for himself, did not ay it merely because he had heard it from somebody lse, and generally invested it with some fresh quality f his own. Perhaps his most emphatic utterance in his respect, and that most resembling his conversa- ion in certain moods, is the *Lay Morals*, all the more utspoken because it was never finished for press. It bounds in sayings such as these: "It is easy to be an ass and to follow the multitude like a blind, besotted bull in a stampede; and that, I am well aware, is what you and Mrs. Grundy mean by being honest." "It is to keep a man awake, to keep him alive to his own soul and its fixed design of righteousness, that the better part of moral and religious education is directed; not only that of words and doctors, but the sharp ferule of calamity under which we are all God's scholars till we die." "Respectability: the deadliest gag and wet blanket that can be laid on men." "I have only to read books, to think . . . the mass of people are merely speaking in their sleep."

So when he spoke, he spoke direct from his own reflection and experience, and when he prayed, he did not hesitate to pass beyond the decorous ring-fence

supposed to include all permissible objects of prayer he gave thanks for "the work, the food, and the brigh skies that make our lives delightful," and honestly and reverently made his petition that he might be granted gaiety and laughter. These instances are on the surface, but in spiritual matters he had a rare power of leaving on one side the non-essential and going straight to the heart of the difficulty, that was hardly realised by the world at large. Taine's charge against Scott that "he pauses on the threshold of the soul" has been renewed against Stevenson. For one thing, in spite of his apparent frankness, he had a deep reserve on the things that touched him most profoundly, and never wore his heart upon his sleeve. So far as the criticism applies to his writings it is little less untrue than that which called him "a faddling hedonist," and its injustice has been shown by Sir Sidney Colvin; so far as it applies to himself, it must be met by a contradiction. He was a man who had walked in the darkest depths of the spirit, and had known the bitterness of humiliation. But in that valley—of which he never spoke—he too, like the friend whom he commemorates, "had met with angels"; he too had "found the words of life."

To return to his plain speaking, in literature he was equally sincere. Sir Walter Scott was for him "out and away the king of the romantics." But if a discerning estimate of Scott's shortcomings, as well as his merits, is desired, it can hardly be found more justly expressed in few words than on the last page but one of *A Gossip on Romance*.

In composition also no one who produced so much

as probably ever been so little the victim of the tereotyped phrase as Stevenson. A few mannerisms e had, no doubt—"it was a beautiful clear night of tars"—but they were from his own mint, and it was ftenest he himself who first called attention to them.

For the most part the effect on his writing of the rdour of which I am speaking is to be seen in two vays—in his diligence and in the intellectual intensity of the work produced. If ever capacity for taking pains be accounted genius in literature, no one can deny the possession of the supreme gift to Stevenson. To Mr. Iles he wrote, in 1887: "I imagine nobody had ever such pains to learn a trade as I had; but I slogged at it day in and day out; and I frankly believe (thanks to my dire industry) I have done more with smaller gifts than almost any man of letters in the world." In 1876 he reckoned that his final copy involved ten times the actual quantity of writing; in 1888 the articles for *Scribner's Magazine* were written seven or eight times; the year before his death he told Mr. Crockett that it had taken him three weeks to write four-and-twenty pages. His prose works, exclusive of his published letters, run to nearly eight thousand pages of the Edinburgh Edition—three hundred words to a page. Nine-tenths of this was written within less than twenty years; and there were, besides, more or less completely conceived, many novels, stories, essays, histories, biographies, and plays which occupied no inconsiderable amount of his attention within that time.

The present point, however, is the energy and perseverance which prepared and secured the mastery,

and in reviewing the amount of Stevenson's finished work, neither the quantity sacrificed in the process must be forgotten, nor the extreme compression of the remainder. His was not the pen that covers page after page without an effort, unblotted and uncondensed, but the tool of the man who, in Mr. Kipling's phrase, "makes most delicate inlay-work in black and white, and files out to the fraction of a hair." In his own words, the only test of writing that he knew was this: "If there is anywhere a thing said in two sentences that could have been as clearly and as engagingly and as forcibly said in one, then it's amateur work." And the main thing in which he thought his own stories failed was this: "I am always cutting the flesh off their bones."

Of such material he produced nearly four hundred pages a year for twenty years, and of the conditions under which most of it was done he wrote to George Meredith in 1893:

"For fourteen years I have not had a day's real health; I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary; and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed, and written out of it, written in hemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness; and for so long, it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove. I am better now, have been, rightly speaking, since first I came to the Pacific; and still, few are the days when I am not in some physical distress. And the battle goes on—ill or well, is a trifle; so as it goes. I was made for a contest, and the Powers have so willed that my battle-field

should be this dingy, inglorious one of the bed and the physic bottle."

But besides the energy spent on the work there is also the intensity of his intelligence. He had no vast memory like Scott's, but he remembered to a most unusual extent his own emotions, and sensations, and the events of his past life, and what remained in his mind preserved its freshness and a lifelike sharpness of outline.

If Stevenson's claim to genius is to be based upon any single gift, it is this quality that most deserves such recognition, nor can it well be refused, if Baudelaire's definition be regarded as adequate: *Le génie n'est que l'enfance retrouvée à volonté.* The paper on *Child's Play*, the *Child's Garden of Verses*, and certain passages quoted in the earlier pages of this book display a power of returning to the ideas and feelings of childhood which has seldom if ever been shown in a higher degree, or has existed except along with intellectual powers of a very considerable calibre.

It related also to the ordinary sensations of maturity. We have all been active and all been tired, but who has given us such pictures of activity and of fatigue as Stevenson? Consider the account of his tobogganing, place beside it the calm of weariness following exercise described in *Walking Tours*, or the drowsy labour of the end of the *Inland Voyage*, and then recall David Balfour. "By what I have read in books, I think few that have held a pen were ever really wearied, or they would write of it more strongly. I had no care of my life, neither past nor future, and I scarce remembered there was such a lad as David

Balfour; I did not think of myself, but just of each fresh step, which I was sure would be my last, with despair, and of Alan, who was the cause of it, with hatred."

As in books so in correspondence. Letters were at times to Stevenson an irksome duty, at others a welcome opportunity for the outpouring of himself to his friends, but in haste or in delight it was entirely without calculation that he dictated or wrote. It occurred suddenly to him one day that his letters to Colvin from Samoa "would make good pickings" after his death, "and a man could make some kind of a book out of it without much trouble." So little have people understood his character and moods, that after this point they have even found in the *Vailima Letters* a self-conscious tone and a continual appeal to the gallery.

To see him was utterly to disbelieve in any regard of ulterior motives. He was his father's son, and with him also, "his affections and emotions, passionate as these were, and liable to passionate ups and downs, found the most eloquent expression both in words and gestures. Love, anger, and indignation shone through him and broke forth in imagery, like what we read of Southern races." If he were talking, he was seldom for a moment still, but generally paced restlessly up and down the room, using his hands continually to emphasise what he was saying, but with gestures that seemed purely necessary and natural.

It is very difficult to give the impression of his demeanour and the brilliancy of his talk without falling into the contrary error, and suggesting a self-con-

sciousness full of acting and exaggeration. Nothing could be further from the truth, and it is easily shown. His singleness of mind always, in later days, at any rate, impressed friends and foes alike with his sincerity of purpose. He was no sportsman and no athlete—fragile and long-haired—yet nobody ever hinted he was unmanly: he was given to preaching, and himself not beyond reproach, yet no one for an instant suspected him of hypocrisy. Whatever he did he did with his whole heart, and it was hard for any one to think otherwise. All the foibles of mysteriousness and secrecy which formed a part of his life in student days fell away from him before the end. The burden of responsibility had diminished, it may be, the gaiety of his temper; but his character shone out the more clearly, as the years showed the man.

II. If Stevenson delivered himself over, heart and soul, as I have said, to the absorbing interest or the ruling passion of the moment, it was assuredly not for the want of other interests or other passions. Of the many-sidedness of his mind the variety of his works is surely sufficient evidence, and even these by no means exhausted the whole of his resources. He wrote novels—the novel of adventure, the novel of character, the novel of incident; he wrote short stories and essays of all kinds—their variety it is impossible even to characterise; he wrote history and biography, fables and moralities, and treatises on ethics; he wrote poems—blank verse, lyrics and ballads, songs and poetry for children; he wrote plays, ranging from melodrama to genteel comedy; books of travel re-

flective and descriptive; he composed prayers and lay sermons, and even ventured on political speculation.

All were not of equal merit—that is not now to the point—but it would not be difficult to pick out at least ten works differing widely from each other, but all definitely belonging to the highest class of their kind. Only one verdict is possible, and for that it is necessary to lay hands upon a commonplace, and appropriate it to the benefit of the man who has best right to the distinction. It is curious that the saying was first made for Goldsmith, the best loved among our authors of the eighteenth century, the one who, in Professor Raleigh's phrase, shares with Stevenson "the happy privilege of making lovers among his readers." But of Stevenson it is even more true to say with Dr. Johnson: *Nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit, nullum quod tetigit non ornavit.*

For this diversity of power and achievement I have relied on the evidence of his published writings, because it would otherwise appear incredible. But account must also be taken of at least a part of his unfinished and unpublished work, differing again in kind; and to that in turn must be added the indications in his letters of other veins of character or reflection that were never worked at all. Over and above all there was the talk of the man himself, in which the alternations were even more rapid and more striking. Wit, humour, and pathos; the romantic, the tragic, the picturesque; stern judgment, wise counsel, wild fooling, all fell into their natural places, followed each other in rapid and easy succession, and

made a marvellous whole, not the least of the wonder being the congruity and spontaneity which gave to it the just effect of being a perfectly natural utterance.

The quality was, of course, not without its defects, the chief of which were an apparent detachment and a sort of fickleness, or want of persistence. It was probably the former of these which led several persons quite independently of each other to give Stevenson the name of "Sprite," a being exempt from the ordinary limitations of mankind, an Ariel free to wander through the realms of imagination, turning hither and thither as his fancies prompted him.

Of the abandonment of his inventions I have already spoken. "He was always full of schemes, and plans, and fancies," wrote W. E. Henley. "You left him hot on one, and the next time you saw him, you found to your distress (having gone all the way with him) that he had forgotten all about it."

Thus if he saw life on each of its many sides in turn with an intensity denied to a wider range of vision, he was liable at times to see it neither steadily nor whole. For the latter he was somewhat compensated by the fact that he saw so many aspects of it in rapid succession that he speedily corrected any narrowness of consideration, his nature further helping him in this—that he never saw it with any narrowness of temper.

Taken together with the kindliness of his nature it also, to a great extent, explains his extraordinary gift of sympathy. He seemed to divine from his own experience how other people felt, and how best they might be encouraged or consoled. I doubt if any

one ever remained for long in his company either reticent or ill at ease. A good instance was shown in Stevenson's talks at Sydney with a man formerly engaged in the "blackbirding" trade, who was with great difficulty induced to speak of his experiences. "He was very shy at ñrst," said Stevenson, "and it was not till I told him of a good many of my escapades that I could get him to thaw, and then he poured it all out. I have always found *that* the best way of getting people to be confidential." We have seen with what success he approached the natives in this manner; in like fashion, no doubt, he inquired of Highlanders about the Appin murder.

But even where he had some set purpose in view, his talk seemed to be a natural and purely spontaneous outpouring of himself. It never seemed to me to be vanity—if it were, it was the most genial that ever existed—but rather a reference to instances within his own knowledge to illustrate the point in hand. He never monopolised the conversation, however eager he might be, but was faithful to his preference for talk which is in its nature a debate; "the amicable counter-assertion of personality," and "the Protean quality which is in man" enabled him, without ceasing to be himself, to meet the temper of his company.

With this multiplicity one might expect to find room in his character for many contradictory qualities or the presence in excess and defect of the very same virtues, and this in truth was so. To reconcile opposites was a task he thought of but little importance, and a favourite phrase with him was Whitman's:

"Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself." Consistency was a virtue for which it was easy to pay too high a price, and often it had to be surrendered for matters of greater import. Aspiration and humour, shrewdness and romance, profusion and self-denial, self-revelation and reserve, in him were curiously matched. On his frankness and his reticence I have already dwelt. He speaks of himself, as Professor Raleigh says, "with no shadow of hypocrisy and no whiff or taint of indecent familiarity"; he tells you *everything*, as you think at first, and so simply and so frankly that it is only gradually you realise that he has not been revealing the things nearest his heart, that you learn no secrets of his home or his religion, nor of anything that it was not for you to know. Self-denial, again, he showed in many ways; in his youth, especially, when money was scarce with him, if any one had to go without, he was the first to surrender his claim and sacrifice himself. On the other hand, with "that virtue of frugality which is the armour of the artist" he was but ill-equipped.

Of his self-restraint in literature there can be no better instance than the very sparing use he makes of the pathetic. In the early essay on *Nurses* it is perhaps a trifle forced; there are hardly two more beautiful or dignified examples of it in English literature than in the essay on *Old Mortality*, and the death of the fugitive French colonel in *St. Ives*. But it was only in conversation that one realised the extraordinary degree to which he possessed the power of moving the heart-strings. It was not that he made

frequent or unmanly use of it, but being less upon his guard, the pathetic aspect of some person or incident would appeal to him, and in a moment he would have the least tender-hearted of his hearers hardly less deeply moved than himself. Ordinarily even in conversation he used it chiefly as a weapon of chivalry in defence of the neglected and the old; but as Swift "could write beautifully about a broomstick," so Stevenson one day described a chair, enlarging upon the hard lot of the legs that had to support the idle seat, until the boy to whom he was talking was almost in tears. On the other side must be set his description of "Home, Sweet Home" in *Across the Plains*, as "belonging to that class of art which may be best described as a brutal assault upon the feelings. Pathos must be redeemed by dignity of treatment. If you wallow naked in the pathetic, like the author of 'Home, Sweet Home,' you make your hearers weep in an unmanly fashion."

But the supreme instance of diverse elements in him was patience and its opposite. Never have I heard of any one in whom these contradictories were both shown in so high a degree. His endurance in illness and in work we have seen: no pain was too great to bear, no malady too long: he never murmured until it was over. No task was too irksome, no revision too exacting—laboriously, and like an eager apprentice he went through with it to the end.

But on the other hand, when impatience came to the surface, it blazed up like the anger of a man who had never known a check. It was generally caused by some breach of faith or act of dishonesty or un-

justifiable delay. The only time I know of its being displayed in public was in a Paris restaurant, where Stevenson had ordered a change of wine, and the very bottle he had rejected was brought back to him with a different label. There was a sudden explosion of wrath; the bottle was hurled against the wall; in an instant the restaurant was emptied, and—so much for long-suffering—the proprietor and his staff were devoting the whole of their attention and art to appease and reconcile the angry man.

Sternness and tenderness in him were very equally matched, though the former was kept mainly for himself and those nearest to him, of whom he asked nearly as much as of himself: tenderness, on the other hand, was for the failings of others. For like many chivalrous people, he expected but little of what he gave with so much freedom. His tenderness had something feminine, yet without lacking the peculiar strength that distinguishes it in a man. The Roman quality of sternness he so much admired came to himself, no doubt, with his Scottish blood. It is a virtue that for the most part requires exclusive dominion over a character for its proper display, and in Stevenson it had many rivals. But that it was genuine his appreciation of Lord Braxfield and his rendering of it in Lord Hermiston place beyond all doubt.

Sternness and pity it is quite possible to harmonise, and the secret in Stevenson's case is perhaps solved in the following letter: "I wish you to read Taine's *Origines de la France Contemporaine* . . . and to try and understand what I have in my mind (ay, and in my heart!) when I preach law and police to you in

season and out of season. What else do we care for, what else is anything but secondary, in that embroiled confounded ravelment of politics, but to protect the old, and the weak, and the quiet, from that bloody wild beast that slumbers in man?

"True to my character, I have to preach. But just read the book. It is not absolutely fair, for Taine does not feel, with a warm heart, the touching side of their poor souls' illusions; he does not feel the infinite pathos of the Federations, poor pantomime and orgie, that (to its actors) seemed upon the very margin of heaven; nor the unspeakable, almost unthinkable tragedy, of such a poor, virtuous wooden-headed lot as the methodistic Jacobins. But he tells, as no one else, the dreadful end of sentimental politics."

III. To deal with Stevenson's intellectual qualities alone is to approach his less fascinating side, and to miss far more than half the influence of his charm. I have referred to his chivalry, only to find that in reality I was thinking of every one of the whole group of attributes which are associated with that name. Loyalty, honesty, generosity, courage; courtesy, tenderness, and self-devotion; to impute no unworthy motives and to keep no grudge; to bear misfortune with cheerfulness and without a murmur; to strike hard for the right and take no mean advantage; to be gentle to women and kind to all that are weak; to be very rigorous with oneself and very lenient to others—these, and any other virtues ever implied in "chivalry," were the traits that distinguished Stevenson. They do not make life easy, as he frequently

found. One day, his stepson tells me, they were sitting on the deck of a schooner in the Pacific, and Stevenson was reading a copy of *Don Quixote*. Suddenly he looked up, and, with an air of realisation, said sadly, as if to himself, "That's me."

In spite of his knowledge of the world and his humour, and a vein of cynicism most difficult to define, many were his quixotries and many the windmills at which he tilted, less often wholly in vain than we thought who watched his errantry. The example remains; and

> "Would to-day, when Courtesy grows chill,
> And life's fine loyalties are turned to jest,
> Some fire of thine might burn within us still!
> Ah, would but one might lay his lance in rest,
> And charge in earnest—were it but a mill!"

Of some of the virtues I have cited it would be superfluous to say more. There is no need to repeat how he faced death in the Riviera or bore the weariness of exile. But I may be pardoned if I dwell upon a few of the more striking instances in which he displayed his open-mindedness, his generosity of temper, his hatred of cruelty, and his readiness to forgive offences.

Generosity is a word in sore danger of being limited to the giving of money, but to Stevenson the quality must be attributed not only in this, but also in the widest possible application. It is a virtue that from its nature is easily abused; this did but make Stevenson think the more highly of it, and it can have no more splendid motto than his own aphorism, of which one version runs: "The mean man doubted,

Greatheart was deceived. 'Very well,' said Greatheart."

Of Stevenson's own generous temper there is no better illustration than a letter written in early days when he had been called to task by Henley for some words of depreciation.

"I think the crier-up has a good trade; but I like less and less every year the berth of runner-down; and I hate to see my friends in it. What is ——'s fault? That he runs down. What is the easiest thing to do? To run down. What is it that a strong man should scorn to do? To run down. And all this comes steeply home to me; for I am horrified to gather that I begin myself to fall into this same business which I abhor in others."

No one ever more eagerly welcomed the success of younger writers, entirely unknown to himself; no one was ever more ready to hail any new achievement in his own art; but of these points the published letters are quite sufficient proof.

Any offence against himself he forgave readily, nor did he find it difficult to make excuses for almost any degree of misconduct on the part of others.

He could be angry enough and stern enough upon occasion, but never was there any one so ready to melt at the least appeal to his compassion or mercy. In his political quarrels he found the greatest difficulty in keeping up an open breach with persons whom he liked in themselves, and for whom his sympathy was engaged, although he was convinced that they were ruining Samoa. Truly he might say: "There was no man born with so little animosity as I."

But in fact the two kinds of generosity went frequently together. It is impossible for me to give the instances I know, but it is the fact that over and over again, no sooner had any one quarrelled with him, than Stevenson at once began to cast about for some means of doing his adversary a service, if only it could be done without divulging the source from whence it came.

In the narrower sense he was generous to a fault, but was ready to take any amount of personal trouble, and exercised judgment in his giving. When there was occasion he set no limit to his assistance. "Pray remember that if ever X—— should be in want of help, you are to strain my credit to breaking, and to mortgage all I possess or can expect, to help him." But in another case: "I hereby authorise you to pay when necessary £—— to Z——; if I gave him more, it would only lead to his starting a gig and a Pomeranian dog. I hope you won't think me hard about this. If you think the sum insufficient, you can communicate with me by return on the subject."

But Stevenson's best service was often in the words with which he accompanied his gift. To his funeral only close personal friends were invited, but there appeared a tall gaunt stranger, whom nobody remembered to have seen before. He came up and apologised for his presence, and said he could not keep away, for Stevenson had saved him one day when he was at his lowest ebb. "I was wandering despondently along the road, and I met Mr. Stevenson, and I don't know whether it was my story, or that he saw I was a Scotchman, but he gave me twenty dollars and

some good advice and encouragement. I took heart again, and I'm getting on all right now, but if I hadn't met Mr. Stevenson, and he hadn't helped me, I should have killed myself that day." And the tears ran down his face.

Of Stevenson's open mind there could perhaps be no better proof than the passage in his last letter to R. A. M. Stevenson, written only two months before his death. If there was a class of men on this earth whom Louis loathed and placed beyond the pale of humanity, it was the dynamiters and anarchists; yet he could write of them in the following strain:—"There is a new something or other in the wind which exercises me hugely: anarchy—I mean anarchism. People who (for pity's sake) commit dastardly murders very basely, die like saints, and leave beautiful letters behind 'em (did you see Vaillant to his daughter? it was the New Testament over again); people whose conduct is inexplicable to me, and yet their spiritual life higher than that of most. This is just what the early Christians must have seemed to the Romans. . . . If they go on being martyred a few years more, the gross, dull, not unkindly bourgeois may get tired or ashamed or afraid of going on martyring; and the anarchists come out at the top just like the early Christians."

I have never met any one who hated cruelty of any kind with so lively a horror—I had almost said with so fanatical a detestation—from his earliest years.

"Do you remember telling me one day when I came in," wrote the Rev. Peter Rutherford, his tutor, to Mrs. Thomas Stevenson after her son's death, "how

it was his eyes were so swollen: tear-swollen? You had found him in the study sobbing bitterly over a tale of cruelty he had been reading all alone." At the other end of his life I can remember his own impassioned account, given late one Sunday evening on his return from Apia, of how he had found a crowd of natives watching a dog-fight. He had plunged into their midst and stopped it, and turned to rebuke them. "But I found all my Samoan had clean gone out of my head, and all I could say to them was 'Pala'ai, Pala'ai!' (Cowards, Cowards!)." But the most characteristic of all his utterances was at Pitlochry in 1881, when he saw a dog being ill-treated. He at once interposed, and when the owner resented his interference and told him: "It's not your dog," he cried out: "It's God's dog, and I'm here to protect it."

Irksome as ill-health was to Stevenson, it was yet the possible effect on his own character that he most dreaded, for he suspected that "being an invalid was a fatal objection to a human being," and his horror of valetudinarianism was due to its being "the worst training upon earth."

He felt it hard that he should be judged by the same standard as men to whom the world was still "full of sea-bathing, and horse exercise, and bracing, manly virtues." Moreover, although he always reckoned his life "as a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded," he could not be altogether unconscious of the insecurity of his tenure. On one of those fragments of paper preserved by chance, on which he used to write down his remarks during the

many periods when he was forbidden to speak, these words occur: "You know the remarks of no doctor mean anything in my case. My case is a sport. I may die to-night or live till sixty." I can remember his saying to me in Samoa, "I haven't had a fair chance, I've had to spend nearly all my life in expectation of death." The chief result with him perhaps was that he sat looser to life, and had grown altogether familiar with the idea of leaving it.

The question of Stevenson's ill-health brings one to the consideration which troubled him now and again in his later days: whether he had not made a mistake in adopting literature as his profession, or whether, after all, he might not have led a life of action. With him, as with Scott, "to have done things worthy to be written was a dignity to which no man made any approach who had only written things worthy to be read." At times he thought with a passing regret of the life of action he had forsaken, and was struck by the irony that his father, who had opposed his choice of the profession of literature, had come to approve of it before he died, while he whom nothing but that change of life would satisfy, had himself lived to doubt its wisdom. But in these comparisons it was an ideal life that he contemplated, where he should be always well and always strong, doing his work in the open air. With such health and such conditions, his character and his powers might have attained to other heights; we should then have known a different man, less human and less endeared to us by the frailties of our common nature. But the field on which he fought with sickness and depression

was one in which most of us are at times engaged, and where many sufferers carry on a lifelong struggle.

There was this about him, that he was the only man I have ever known who possessed charm in a high degree, whose character did not suffer from the possession. The gift comes naturally to women, and they are at their best in its exercise. But a man requires to be of a very sound fibre before he can be entirely himself and keep his heart single, if he carries about with him a talisman to obtain from all men and all women the object of his heart's desire. Both gifts Stevenson possessed, not only the magic but also the strength of character to which it was safely intrusted.

But who shall bring back that charm? Who shall unfold its secret? He was all that I have said: he was inexhaustible, he was brilliant, he was romantic, he was fiery, he was tender, he was brave, he was kind. With all this there went something more. He always liked the people he was with, and found the best and brightest that was in them; he entered into all the thoughts and moods of his companions, and led them along pleasant ways, or raised them to a courage and a gaiety like his own. If criticism or reminiscence has yielded any further elucidation of his spell, I do not know: it defies my analysis, nor have I ever heard it explained.

There linger on the lips of men a few names that bring to us, as it were, a breeze blowing off the shores of youth. Most of those who have borne them were taken from the world before early promise could be fulfilled, and so they rank in our regard by virtue of their possibilities alone. Stevenson is among the

fewer still who bear the award both of promise and of achievement, and is happier yet in this; besides admiration and hope, he has raised within the hearts of his readers a personal feeling towards himself which is nothing less deep than love.